KASHMIR AND IT'S PEOPLE

Studies in the evolution of Kashmiri society

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INTRODUCTION

When we went to the Indian Council of Social Science Research for a grant on a project concerning Kashmir and it's people, Dr. Saligram Bhat and I had no idea how important the project was going to be. As it turned out, we were able to organize two Seminars, one on the saints and sages of Kashmir and the other on Kashmir's environment. We were also able to fit in a book on Kashmir and it's people, as part of the project.

A mere look at the table of contents shows the calibre of the contributors to this volume. Each subject has also been chosen with care, so as to bring out a comprehensive picture of the many-sided genius of the Kashmiri people.

Going through the material submitted by the learned authors, one is naturally set thinking as to what exactly it is that has brought Kashmiris to their present predicament. Sometimes, one feels that nature has been unkind to these beautiful, intelligent and civilized people and that they did not deserve their present fate.

I have heard some very strange explanations about this phenomenon. One is, of course, about the pivotal position Kashmir occupies in the world. Even in ancient times, it was supposed to be Mount Meru, the centre of the then known world. Today, we look at the frontiers of Jammu & Kashmir State touching or nearly touching or very close to India, Pakistan, Tibet or China, Afghanistan, the erstwhile Soviet Union and the present Central Asian republics. No wonder, it attracts the attention of the Great Powers, who want to make it independent so that they can occupy it and establish their military bases there. Failing that, they would like it to be within the suzerainty of a power that is susceptible of being influenced. And this has always been so, across the centuries.

The other explanation concerns the *samoohik karma* of the Kashmiri Pandits. They are found guilty of various crimes. One theory traces their decline and fall to their adopting the alien way of life, hobnobbing freely with them, eating and drinking in their company, adopting their free and easy ways and generally getting infected with the impurities of the *malechchas*.

Another theory brings out the enormous crime committed by the KPs that, in spite of their claiming to be Saraswat Brahmins, the highest of the high, they stooped to eat non-vegetarian food. This created such a collective sin that God was forced to punish the community for its deviation from the norm.

A major thesis bases its entire framework on the central premise that there are global forces of Islamic fundamentalism wanting for centuries to convert India into Darussalam, the land of the Muslims. Unfortunately, Islam was fated to meet its match in hardy, stubborn Kashmiri Pandits, who refused to be converted to Islam despite *jaziya*, massacres, burning of sacred threads, rape and abduction of their females, demolition and desecration of their temples and so on.

Far from their getting converted, they prevented Islam from flourishing in its pure version and allowed it to be sullied by the currents of Rishi cult and Kashmiri Sufism. The result was that even the so-called Kashmiri Muslim continued to bear allegiance to certain common saints and themes, which did not have the sanction of pure Sunni Islam.

In fact, when the Kashmiri Pandit was squeezed into a tight corner, he ran to the Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur and requested him to take cudgels for the Hindu faith. That created the Sikh *khalsa* and led to the Sikh resurgence, which posed an effective challenge to the Mughal Empire and finally brought about its downfall.

Another theory says that clashes between a civilized sophisticated elite and the barbaric hordes, which surround any such island of excellence, have been repeated again and again in the history of the world. The ancient Greek, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Chinese and othei great civilizations had the same experience. This is the price genius is almost fated to meet at the hands of mediocrity and barbarism.

Today, one finds several responses to the dismal situation in which the community finds itself. Ejected from the land of its forefathers, forced to live in ramshackle camps in sub-human conditions, dispersed to all corners of the country and the globe, its young being tempted into matrimony outside the community, its language disappearing in a world that is being rapidly globalized, its culture almost gone, it is rudderless, leaderless and bereft of a clear direction.

There are some who try to look at the bright picture. What would our children have achieved in the hell Kashmir had become, they ask. Whosoever has come out of the valley has prospered. Look at the generations of earlier migrants. They have shone bright in the clear firmament of India. Migration is the proverbial kick in the behind of a hunchback, who resultantly gets a straight back.

When we speak of the Return, there are many who pooh pooh such talk away. Who wants to return, they ask and do not tarry for an answer.

In one meeting of Kashmiri Pandits, I also got carried away by a gust of optimism. Listening to breast-beating all day long, year after year, gets on one's nerves. So I narrated a story. Here it is.

Guru Nanak once paid a visit to a village, which was inhabited by evil folk. They maltreated the guru, and did not offer him food, water and the customary civilities. Leaving the village the following morning, the Guru looked back at the village and blessed the inhabitants, "Base raho (May you remain settled here!)."

He went to another village. Here the people treated him with great respect. They brought their tastiest dishes, pressed his feet, listened to his discourse with alert curiosity and generally accorded him the honour a saint deserves. Leaving the village the next morning, the guru cursed the inhabitants thus: "Bikhar jao (May you be scattered!)".

Mardana, his chief disciple, questioned the conduct of the guru. What was this? He had blessed the evildoers and cursed the pure in heart.

"You misunderstood me, Mardana," said Guru Nanak, "The evil need to be circumscribed. They should remain at one place, where they can do the least harm. The good are required everywhere. Each noble man stands as a beacon light of righteous conduct for thousands".

No one has understood the processes of history. We do not know whether the world follows the laws *of dharma* and if there is justice in the workings of nature. Sometimes, it appears that no one can escape the fruit of his *karma.* And sometimes, it appears as if there is no justice in this world. But many of us believe in God and His ultimate justice. What the future holds in store for us, we do not know. Whether we shall survive as a separate community, whether we should survive as a separate community in a rapidly globalizing world, whether we will ever be able to return to Kashmir and live our lives with honour and dignity, whether we should return, all these questions seem to be begging for answers.

I would like to conclude on a positive note. It is my personal conviction that there is method in the seeming madness called life. God has made this world and He is running it in some direction. We are all safe in His hands and whatever He does is for the best. At any point of time, we have to apply our mind and try to do what appears to be most desirable in the prevailing circumstances. If our motives are pure, only good will befall us.

Let us keep our faith in God. Let us listen to the God in us and do His bidding. He will never mislead us. He will never betray us.

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M. K. Kaw

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PART I

THE EARLY KASHMIRI

THE STORY BEGINS...

The story of Kashmir begins with an archaeological account of our earliest ancestors.

There is a general consensus that the rise of the Pir Panjal range resulted in an impoundment of the primeval drainage. At some stage, the Jhelum emerged from a fault near Baramulla and drained out the lake. This resulted in the emergence of the karewas, *where the earliest men made an attempt at a settled life.*

No Paleolithic sites or shelters have been located so far. These seem to have been lost due to climatic ravages.

As the climate improved, Neolithic man emerged and there is a profusion of sites, showing dexterity in production of pottery, burnished ware, stone and bone tools, as also contacts with people of adjoining areas, especially in China and Central Asia.

The people of Burzahom were long-headed dolichocranic individuals, more akin to the Harappans from R 37 than to the Neolithic people of Southern India. There is no evidence of marked interruption or ethnic intrusion during the Neolithic period.

CHAPTER -1

OUR EARLIEST ANCESTORS

T. N. Khazanchi

Archaeology denotes the science of ancient remains. It has long been accepted as a scientific discipline providing tangible evidence for building the superstructure of history. Infact its claim is accepted as supreme especially in such periods where written records are absent or have remained undeciphered. Where, however, written records exist, the material remains turned up by the spade convey in a telling manner the import of the written word.

Kashmir is like a jewel in the wonb of Himalayas. Nature has been bountiful in the form of shimmering lakes, snow capped majestic heights, lushgreen meadows, pageantry of colour, exhilarating dawns and sun-sets, gurgling springs and rivulets, which have considerably affected the lives of the people, not least in the field of art. Due to the receptiveness of the people, the artistic instincts were stimulated by the exquisite natural splendour in which their lives were steeped. Kashmir lay on the route to High Asia, and inspite of the ebb and flow of great external movements on its borders or tribal incursions from the North or the forays of its rulers into distant territories, Kashmir consistently managed to maintain a certain indigenous and independent type of culture as reflected in the field of art architecture, crafts, philosophical and literary attainments, which indicates the inherent aesthetic sense and rare adaptability of its inhabitants. The ancient remains, literary records and monuments in the valley clearly indicate the heights achieved.

But how did it all begin. That by itself is an exciting story. That the valley of Kashmir was once a vast lake, known as "Satisaras", the lake of Parvati (consort of Shiva), is enshrined in our traditions. There are many mythological stories connected with the desiccation of the lake, before the valley was fit for habitation. The narratives make it out that it was occupied by a demon 'Jalodbhava', till Lord Vishnu assumed the form of a boar and struck the mountain at Baramulla (ancient Varahamula) boring an opening in it for the water to flow out. 'Nilamata Purana' of the 7th century A.D. which is the earliest local reference details out that the valley was formed out of water, when the lake was drained off by Ananta, at the behest of Lord Vishnu through an outlet at Baramulla. There is a reference in Nilmata Purana to two tribal set-ups of 'Nagas' and 'Pisachas' who were not friendly to each other residing in the valley but later they reconciled to each other. The chief of the Nagas, the son of Kashyapa named the valley after his father. Kalhana who wrote his magnum opus Rajatarangini (river of Kings) in 1148-49A.D. has mentioned that Prajapati Kashyapa was assisted by Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva in killing Jalodbhava. After his death, the lake water was drained off and the land came to be known as Kashmir after Kashyapa. The text further attributes supernatural powers to Nagas. The Persian chroniclers also refer to similar accounts relating to the origin of the valley.

The mythological stories stated above are supported by other important sources of information regarding the lake, sacred places, early historical geography of the place, pilgrimage routes and topographical details which provide useful information. There are various mahatmyas which provide the student of history valuable information on various tirthas, springs (Nagas), mountains, rivers, besides other geographical and topographical details.

However, the most popular and an important literary reference is a mahatmya in praise of Goddess Sharika, a prominent form of Goddess Durga. It has an interesting story regarding the lake and its desiccation. The narrative emphasizes that Jalodbhava brought havoc to people residing on the periphery of the lake. The gods implored Mata-Satti, the consort of Lord Shiva, to deliver the land and the oppression of the demon. With a pebble in her beak, she dropped it over the spot where the demon stayed. The pebble grew into a gigantic hill and the demon got crushed under its weight.

This very hill is popularly known as Haer Parbat, which is Sharika Hill, after Goddess Sharika. Sharika is "Haer" in Kashmiri. On the top of the hill on the north western side is the famous shrine of Goddess Sharika and the huge monolith which represents her, bears "Shri Chakra", the mystical diagram of the Goddess, which has continued to be an object of worship for many centuries. Whatever, the genuineness of the legend, the place is revered even now as the seat of the gods who have taken their abode over the hill in gratitude to Sharika - an important form of Durga.

GEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND LAND FORMATION

It is primarily the Geologists who have postulated effectively on the formation of the lake, its extent and its 'desiccation', resulting in the emergence of the commanding heights of Karewas, which attracted the attention of the earliest Kashmiris for making an attempt at a settled life. The valley of Kashmir is heavily encircled by high mountains on all sides, while these open out near Baramulla, forming a gorge where river Jhelum (ancient Vitasta) gushes out. The Central Himalayan axis, after its bifurcation near Kulu, runs as one the high twin peaks of Nunkun (23,444')' the other branch runs due west as the high range of Pir Panjal. Between these two branches of crystalline axis of the Himalayas lies a longitudinal valley with a south-east to north-west, some 135 kms long and 40 kms broad in its middle. The total area of Kashmir valley is 3040 sq.km. The mean height above the sea is nearly 1730m. The mountain ranges which surround it all around except the narrow gorge near Baramulla, attain to the north-east and the north-west a high general altitude, some peaks rising above 6000m.

There exists a general consensus that the rise of Pir Panjal range was responsible for impounding the primeval drainage and giving rise to a vast lake. As the Pir Panjal range continued to rise, the Karewa lake shrank and shifted to the Himalayan flank. At some stage, the Jhelum emerged from a fault near Baramulla and drained out the lake.

After the desiccation of the lake, the Karewas (lake beds) emerged as the most dominating aspect of the landscape. Pleistocene (Being the earlier epoch of the Quaternary, or the corresponding system of the formation of rocks) or post Pliocene (latest epoch of the Tertiary or the corresponding system of the rocks. The first period of the Tertiary was marked by the formation of high mountains - as the Alps, cancasus, and Himalayas as also the dominance of mammals on land) deposits of the nature of fluviatile (produced by stream action), lacustrine (relating to or growing in lakes) or glacial (Produced by glaciers) have spread over many parts of Kashmir and occupy a wide extent. Of these the most interesting as well as conspicuous examples are the fresh water (fluviatile or lacustrine deposits) found as low flat mounds bordering the mountains above the modern alluvium of the Jhelum. These are known as 'Karewas' or 'Uddars' in Kashmir. These are the lake beds which emerged after the lake got drained out.

The Karewa formation occupies nearly half of the area of the valley. It had a width from 12.5 to 25 km along with its south-west side and extends for a length of nearly 80 kms from Shopayan to Baramulla. The Karewas are mostly horizontally stratified deposits consisting of fine-grained sand, loam (a soil consisting of a friable nature of varying proportions of clay, silt and sand), blue sandy clays with lenticular (lentil shaped) bands of gravelly (loose rounded fragments of rock) conglomerate (rock composed of rounded fragments varying from small pebbles to large boulders). At some localities the finer sands and clays show laminations indicating a summer melting of ice and winter freezing. Evidence of glacial oscillations is recorded in the Karewa deposits. At the end of the Ice Age, there was a forest period in the Kashmir valley.

The trail was blazed in 1935 by the Yale-Cambridge expedition of H.D.E. Terra, Teilde Chardin and T.T. Patterson who made a detailed study of the Karewas. They were pursuing the traces of Early Man and equating the Ice Ages in Europe with other areas they traversed. They also undertook the task of assessing the prehistoric cultures of Panjab, the Narbada and Madras and made stray references to that effect in the valley. Looking back to the millions of years of pleistocene age in the valley, they have fully demonstrated the results of glaciation and intermittent interglacial periods which in themselves were responsible for the origin and shrinkage of the lake, formation of Karewas divisible into two groups, the lower and the upper separated by moraines of second glaciation. Moraines are an accumulation of earth and stones carried and finally deposited by a glacier. There have been varied climatic oscillations, and periodical uplifts of the Panjal range and the Himalayan heights in the north-east. Consequent on consistent glacial activities, uplifts and related movements, the silts of the Karewas were deposited. At a later date Jhelum (ancient Vitasta) emerged and actively engaged in deepening its bed. With continued erosion and uplifts, the lake water drained off and because of favourable conditions it could have been possible for the Palaeoman (Early Man) to live who had to depend on the big game. Ample evidence of his existence in the adjoining areas has been found.

With the drainage of the lake, seasonal dust storms deposited a thin layer of yellow silt, probably loess over the shell bearing lake beds. Later Geologists are of the opinion that the present day lakes like Wular, Manasbal, Anchar and Dal are probably the remains of the Primeval lake.

Heavy glaciations, inter glaciations, uplifts, drainage, emergence of Karewas beds, and acute climatic oscillations have considerably affected the emergence of early 'Man' in Kashmir, his evolution, progress and regress in initiating a settled way of life. The experts, therefore, felt an urgent need for a detailed study of Palaeoclimatic and Palaeoenvironmental changes as recorded in the Karewa profile which they envisaged would be unraveled through a multidisciplinary approach. The Pioneering work in this behalf was carried out under 'Multidisciplinary Kashmir' Palaeoclimatic Research Projects'. Sponsored and funded by the Deptt. of Science and Technology, the project was initiated by Prof. D.P. Agarwal of Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad,who functioned as its Director. The Universities of Delhi, Garhwal,Gujarat, Kashmir, Lucknow and Panjab, Geological Survey of India, and Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, Lucknow, collaborated in this Project. The field work undertaken under this project has also helped in reconstructing Palaeoclimatic history of the valley for the last four million years which constitute the minimum age estimate of intermontane basin of Kashmir.

The Karewa deposits are superimposed by a light brown, pinkish, compacted, unstratified homogenous silt, about 3 mts thick loess. The loess deposit accumulated after the draining of the lake and must have stopped before the advent of man as is borne out by its weathered top. The loess is of late pleistocene epoch.

Loess the third top-most member of the Karewa series has been for the first time to contain some alternation of multiple dark bands representing palaeosols. In India Kashmir is the only known region where loess-palaeosol sequence is available. Both loess-palaeosol layers are very good continental Palaeoclimatic indicators. The thickness of loess - Palaeosol succession varies on both Pir Panjal and Himalayan flanks. It has been asserted that the lake continued to be in force on the Himalayan flank till the late pleistocene times and loess started depositing on this side after the lake was finally drained out. Till then the loess had started depositing on the Pir Panjal flank. These deposits now stand dated. The upper most palaeosol is radiocarbon dated to C. 18000 B.P. and the lower to 31000 B.P. These dates represent major climatic oscillations in Burzahom area. Burzahom is an international archaeological site in the valley of Kashmir. The 'Neolithic Habitation' is on the topmost deposit of Palaeosol. Loess and Palaeosol horizons are associated with glacial, interglacial and later climatic oscillations.

NEOLITHIC BURZAHOM

I have had the proud privilege of stepping on the foot prints of our 'Earliest Ancestors' who settled on the soil of Kashmir after the lakes had drained out and the soil was fit for habitation. I could hear the echoes of their trials and tribulations in settling in a hostile environment with inadequate tools and braving the rigours of the weather which was intensely harsher. The romance of the spade yielded fruitful dividends, though in the process the mythological progenitor of Kashmir, Sage kashyapa proved to be elusive.

The 'Earliest Kashmiris' who initiated an attempt at some sort of a settled life were attracted by the commanding heights of Burzahom Karewa which is about 25 km north-east of Srinagar via the famous Moghul Gardens and about 2 to 3 kms from the Telbal Nala. The habitable top of the Karewa is about half a km with the present village of Burzahom nestled at the base. The Great Mahadeva Peak and Tirtha overlooks it and the forests are in abundance in Dachigam area and beyond. These abound in hanglu and other game. The Dal Lake abounding in fish and fowl is hardly a km away as the crow flies. The Earliest Settlers were primarily hunters. The game was in abundance in the adjacent forests. Fishing and fowling was pretty easy in the lake adjacent to the Karewa. The 'Dagwan Nala' is running parallel to the Karewa before it discharges itself in the Telbal Nala. There was enough material in it for fashioning the tools in stone in which they were gaining some proficiency, just after evolving from a cruder Earlier Lithic Age.

The trail was blazed in this behalf in 1935 by de Terra and Paterson of the Yale and Cambridge Expedition who were in pursuit of 'Early Man' and associated human cultures in the valley. What is, however, of special interest to our topic is the fact that they discovered the Megalithic site of Burzahom and conducted random excavations for about a few days. They, however, erroneously thought that the site belongs to the Indus Culture. Besides, they referred to "Layer C" kitchen level in unweathered loess with polished bone and stone tools. This was presumed to be the oldest agricultural period of Mesopotamia range from 4000 to 6000 B.C. This was the tentative assessment of the excavators who suggested for further excavations at the site. No definite date was assigned to the loessic deposit and it was presumed that the beginning of this culture must have been still earlier.

The observation made by the explorers attracted international attention. As soon as the state Deptt. of Archaeology was integrated with the Archaeological Survey of India, I was asked by the Directorate to undertake the excavation in depth and detail. The site was excavated vertically and horizontally during the field seasons from 1960 to 1971. In a vertical dig the cultural sequence is established, and in case it is intended to determine the details of the various phases, the dig is taken up horizontally.

I would like to emphasize once again that being a son of the soil, I have had the proud privilege of stepping on the foot prints of our earliest ancestors who settled on the soil of Kashmir after the lakes had drained out and the soil was fit for habitation. The romance of the 'Spade' Yielded fruitful dividends. Though in the process the mythological progenitor of Kashmir, Sage Kashyapa, proved to be elusive. None-the-less it has added a new chapter to the History Of Kashmir and made a significant contribution to the neolithic cultures in the sub-continent in being defined as Northern Neolithic Culture of India with special traits.

First and foremost the excavation conducted at Burzahom was the first of its kind in Kashmir on the basis of stratified cultural deposits. It was the first habitation site of its kind in Kashmir which was extensively excavated. The concept of stratification in archaeological excavations on the geological model was first introduced in India by Sir R.E. Mortimer Wheeler, the then Director General in the Archaeological Survey of India, when he conducted his first excavation at Bhir Mound in Taxila in 1944. He was in pursuit of identifying the Aryans on an Archaeological basis. Sponsored by the State Govt. I participated in all the excavations conducted by him both in the North and in the South during his tenure in India and thus got fully groomed.

Early in the post-glacial times, an important change was taking place in human evolution; man began to control his environment and was thus enabled to settle down in villages effectively. The food gathering or hunting economy of the Mesolithic forbears of the late pleistocene times gives way to deliberate food production involving husbandry and stock raising. This change in human economy has been termed as "Neolithic Revolution", and took place in different areas over a great range of time. It represents a stage in economic and technological development. Other traits often associated with this new way of life are the grinding and polishing of tools and the manufacture of pottery. The manufacture of pottery in some excavations proved no longer an essential attribute of this culture. The use of metal was unknown in the typical neolithic economy.

The excavations conducted at Burzahom clearly indicate that a neolithic revolution took place in the valley in the 3rd millenium B.C. It has by now been defined as Northern Neolithic Culture because of the distinctive features relating to the structural features, high incidence of tools in bone and stone, especially in bone, and special ritualistic practices. Besides the peculiarity of the culture lies in the fact that it has such distinctive features that it had to be defined as Northern Neolithic culture with individualistic traits.

In the same sequence archaeological investigations conducted by us revealed that Kashmir had a highly developed neolithic culture spread through the length and the breadth of the valley and was not confined to Burzahom only. The neolithic settlements are by now well documented and densely distributed. Under "Operation Jhelum", a novel exploration programme was initiated by us. Two of my colleagues in the Frontier Circle of the Survey, Shri S.L. Shali and Dr. R.K. Pant floated down river Jhelum in a doonga and covered an extensive area on the right and left bank of Jhelum from Khanabal to Pampura. Neolithic sites were located at Jayadevi Udar, Thajivor near Bijibehara, Gufkral, Begagund, Dadsar, Hariparigom, Olchibag, Panjgom, Pampore, Sempur and Sombur. All these sites lie in Pulwama District. Similarly during random surface explorations, similar sites were located at 'Gurahoma Sangri' situated above the Wular lake, Damodar Karewa (Airport Area) and other sites in Anantnag District. Extensive fieldwork was undertaken in the valley by many experts from a few Universities under a special palaeoclimatic project.

A significant discovery of the recent years was of such types at Dragtiyug near Prang and the nearby site at Kijpora on the confluence of river Sindh and Kranknadi. Both these sites lie on the ancient route of Srinagar-Leh highway and as such assume importance. Earlier similar sites were located at Kanishpur (Kanishkapura) on Srinagar-Baramulla highway. These sites are of great historical importance. These lie on the route which lead in the historical past through Urusha (modern Hazara) to ancient Gandhara Region (North Western Pakistan) and then to Iran on one side and on the other to Afghanistan and thence to Central Asia. It is through this route that Hieun-Tsang entered the valley in 629 A.D. The other route crossing over the Zoji-La connects Kashmir with Ladakh and then with Tibet, as also to Central Asia and China. This route was followed by great adventureres like Rinchana, (14th Century A.D.), Mirza Haider Dughlat (16th Century A.D.) who have at their respective levels changed the course of history of Kashmir. With the discovery of neolithic material on these routes, it is undoubtedly clear that both the routes were most important thoroughfares during prehistoric times.

The Neolithic settlers at Burzahom occupied the commanding terraces, the remnants of the lake beds. The environmental set up was quite exciting. The Kashmir valley is full of deodar, walnut, pine, willow and birch. There were plenty of smaller lakes. The neolithic folks had abundance of game, fish and fowl. They had been on the prowl, roaming from place to place and were just evolving from a cruder earlier lithic age when they chanced on the site. They made it their home and evolved further by sheer hard labour, skill and contacts with the adjoining regions. Their progress and regress is reflected in the soil, the cultural deposits.

The Neolithic character of the site was established during the excavations. Four periods of occupation have been identified. Continuous development in the cultural sequence without any hiatus is indicated. Periods I and II exclusively indicate the neolithic sequence. Period III is a megalithic sequence. The megalithic sequence is some sort of a deviation in the cultural context. Huge boulders hewn by contrasting temperatures in the distant hills were brought to the site by sheer manual power and installed most probably to commemorate an important event in the community. Technically these are Menhirs, massive, tall, free standing, sometimes many tons in weight, forming some sort of a rough pattern. Such megalithic sites are densely distributed in all parts of the valley, indicating the extent.

The earliest level of occupation is characterized by 'Dwelling Pits'. This is period I at Burzahom. Our joy knew no bounds when we struck at the first settled home of our ancestors. So we had got him and caught time after a gap of about 5000 years (Radio carbon date). These Dwelling Pits were devised by the Earliest Kashmiris who had evolved sufficiently to fashion a settled way of life. Till then he was on the prowl and almost roaming like an animal. The battle for survival had borne fruit. The dwelling pits were well like structures, but narrower at the top and wider at the base, probably for accommodating the family. The narrow top was also devised to prove more useful for provding a superstructure against the inclemencies of weather which were harsh and contrasting. These dwelling pits were dug into the loessic deposits which is the virgin soil, untouched by any earlier human activity. Scooping out such structures through compact hard soil needed strenuous efforts and the stone celt marks on the sides indicated the hard labour involved with the inadequate tool kit at their command. The diameter and the depth varied in each home depending on the strength of the family and perhaps the resources available. The largest dwelling pit measured 2.74 m at the top, expanding to 4.75m at the base, the depth being 3.95m. In deeper pits, landing steps were provided upto a point, and ladders may have been used for further descent. Post holes in the periphery at the ground level proved that there must have been a superstructure for covering the home. That the pits scooped out of the loessic soil were used for living is clearly evidenced by the layers of ash, charcoal and animal bones within the pits. There are clear traces of open air living at the ground level during sunny weathers. This is indicated by the presence of shallow storage pits 60-91 cm in diameter, stone hearths and side lanes in close proximity to each other. Animal bones and also bone implements were found in these storage pits. The decorative element is borne out in as much as that the interiors of these underground homes were plastered and in some of the pits the floor had a thin layer of red ochre. Over this floor in one of the pits horns of an antler (hanglu) were found which may have been preserved for fashioning the tools after utilizing flesh of the hunt for food and the skin to wrap themselves in. Hanglu was an important animal in the life of the Burzahomese, since it not only provided food, but the antler was used for making sophisticated and polished bone tools and the skin for the body. For sharpening the tips of the tools while staying in the pits, rubber stones were used. Hanglu was readily available in the Dachigam area just a few kms away from Burzahorn.

Apart from the circular or oval pits enunciated above, 'Pit Chambers' were found. These were shallower, rectangular or squarish in plan and the dimensions were larger. Such homes were found on the north of the site. An imposing home on the south of the settlement was also laid bare. This pit extended in three trenches measuring 6.40 x 7.00m, the depth being 1.5m. A hearth circular in plan was located near the centre. Beside, deep and wide post holes were found at the corners, suggesting an imposing superstructure. It may have been the palace of the tribal chief. In one of the deep and wide post holes, charred pieces of wood were found identified as pine wood (Pinus). The roof must have been of birch (bark of Betula Utilis) and hay, charred remains of which have been found at the site. Birch is very good roofing material and effective against snow. This is even now used as effective roofing material in old houses in urban centres as also in the rural areas. Even the village Burzahorn near the Megalithic Complex indicates the importance of birch. Burzahom means the place of birch, and may have been a supply centre for this roofing material. The birch tree is a moderate sized deciduous tree which commonly grows in the Himalayas between 3000 mts and 4200 mts. The nearest source was the mountain range 25 kms towards east of Burzahorn.

Towards the north of the megalithic complex a series of shallow dwelling pits and pits chambers were found. These were comparatively smaller and shallower. The structural pattern clearly indicated that these were provided with drains, pestholes, which are suggestive of a superstructure, besides clay and stone lined hearths. The distinctive feature is the finding of post holes around the hearths, clay or stone lined. It is apparent that the duly skinned animal hung on poles was roasted with simmering fire from below, as is still the practice in some areas in Afghanistan and the bordering regions. The significant addition on this side of the megalithic complex was that stone querns (a primitive hand mill for grinding grain) were found within the pit chambers. This is suggestive of early food producing techniques.

As time advanced, structural patterns have changed and tool kit indicates variations, sophistication and variation. Apparently contacts with bordering regions have induced changes. This has accordingly been termed as N.P.II. What is striking is that some sort of a community centre is in evidence apart from mud platforms and mud walls. The alignments indicate changes effected in the plan, besides alterations and additions. The earlier Dwelling .Pits have been filled up and rammed with red ochre and used as ground floor under the changed structural pattern. The floor levels so found had series of post holes indicating the provision of a covering superstructure. In one of the largest area of the floor level measuring 3.96m x 1.21 m at a depth of 2.13m below the surface, a series of 45 post holes were found. The evidence of a cluster of post holes in close proximity to each other clearly suggests a community centre provided with an imposing superstructure with birch and hay as roofing material. This is a clear advance in the form of a community centre, since this evidence is absolutely lacking in N.P.I, which is mainly characterized by underground dwelling pits and chambers. There is adequate provision of hearths both of clay and stone lined. Querns and mullers (a stone, or piece of wood, metal or glass used as Pestle) were found in these structures. Mid levels of this period witnessed a devastation by fire since a thick charcoal and ash layer was seen running through an extensive area.

The over-all economic level at Burzahom seems to be of hunters and food gatherers with the neolithic folk at Burzahom Practising rudimentary cultivation which is attested by harvesters both in bone and stone, round perforated stones (mace-heads) used possibly as weights for digging sticks. A few round perforated discs with sharpened outer edges suggests that these may also have been used for individual hunting and as an aggressive personal weapon.

In a wider perspective, the structural and living patterns were determined by the effective use of tools which have been found in an ample measure during excavations both in N.P.I and N.P.II. Tools in bone and stone have been found. These are really fascinating and make an interesting study. These are reflective of their trials and tribulations in eking out a living and survival against odds. Particularly striking is the bone industry which in incidence, extent and technical excellence has no parallel in the Indian sub-continent. To a great extent they utilized the natural resources which were in abundance near the neolithic settlement which was coming up. The material for stone tools was readily available in the Dagwan Nala running parallel to the Burzahom Karewa. Antlers and other animals were roaming freely in the adjoining forests. They provided the hunt and material for bone tools. Timber was available in the forests. The lakes lying at a stones throw were full of fish and fowl. They honed their skills as time advanced, perfected their techniques by contacts and trade which made community living possible. The incidence of tools in bone and stone is prolific.

The main types of stone tools comprise hoes, axes, adzes, chisels, double edged and perforated picks, flake knives, harvesters with perforations for handling these, sling balls, hammers, pestles and pounders, querns, rubbers, mace-heads, double edged long and short points, awls, needles etc. All these tools had a bearing on their lives. Specifically axes, adzes, hoes and chisels were for digging, cutting down trees and chiselling these for a meaningful purpose. Special mention may be made of harpoons primarily in bone and a few of these even in stone, meant for fishing. Metallic harpoons hafted to a wooden handle are still in use for fishing in the placid waters in the lakes even now. Single and double edged points were used for knitting and making the nets. Exact prototypes of double edged points are still being used for manufacturing Kani shawls in Kashmir. The use of multipronged harpoons or long spears duly hafted even now is quite striking. "This tradition is still alive even on the shores of seas and lakes of Central Asia on Caspian and Aral seas. It is an ingenious weapon and illustrates gradual diffusion of the hunter over the world. It spread through Russia to Siberia in 3000 B.C. and from there to China and Japan". The Burzahomese may have picked it up due to contacts with Central Asians.

Apart from the stone tools found at the site, what is particularly striking is the 'Bone Industry'. The varied tool complex demonstrates in ample measure, technical advance and efficiency acquired in sustaining the economy. It is the bone tool industry which has given the Northern Neolithic Culture its distinctive trait. The bone tools found during excavations in the various level of the Neolithic Period (I and II) comprise harpoons (narchu in Kashmiri), long and curved awls, needles small and long both with eyes and without eyes, points, arrow and spear heads, borers, daggers, double edged points, horn picks. Besides we have personal ornaments like beads and pendants and even combs. In manufacturing these tools, not only professional competence is indicated, but the technique indicates great skill and some of the types have a bearing on their contacts. Particularly the harvester with two holes for handling it clearly indicates contact with China. More of it will be detailed out as the narrative progresses.

Generally the tools were fashioned out of long bones of animals like stag, sheep, goat etc. by taking recourse to splitting, chipping and grinding. Polishing in part or full was induced by constant rubbing or friction. This is particularly so in the case of needles. Holes were produced by the technique of alternate pecking and drilling. The needles, awls and double edged points needed primarily for sewing and knitting bear effective polish. The manufacture of harpoons for fishing demonstrates considerable skill by shaping it like a trident or making it multi pronged.

It has already been emphasized that the structural patterns have changed in N.P.II. Besides, it is apparent that there have been furthen arrivals. The density is evident. This is further confirmed by the incidence of tools in bone and stone which is considerably more. The tool kits have multiplied. The designed settlement is thriving. There is further advance. Rudimentary knowledge of agriculture is in evidence. The tools needed for digging planting, sowing and thrashing of crops abound prominently. The incidence of hoes, harvesters, picks and ring stones bear it out. This is further confirmed by the investigation of botanical remains from the site by experts in this field. Twenty four soil samples from different levels of the Neolithic Period were got examined and the plant remains so recovered belonged to the ancient crops of wheat, barley and lentil. Some of these were of the wild variety. It may, however, be emphasized that the presence of some querns and pestles in the Dwelling Pits and Pit Chambers of N.P.I might also have been used for pounding the wild varieties of the cereals apart from crushing the meat.

NEOLITHIC ART

Inspite of the advances made in the form of extensive and varied incidence of tools in bone and stone, hunting especially with the bow and arrow seems to be the main basis of subsistence at Burzahom. This is substantiated by the discovery of an engraved stone slab from the middle levels of N.P.II. This stone slab formed part of an oblong (irregular rectangular) structure formed by stone slabs at the site. What is particularly striking is that the slab with its engraving stood on its edge in an inconspicuous place and was apparently reutilized. It had lost its importance of the purpose originally intended. Inside the oblong structure was found in filling of yellowish sand. The purpose of this extant structure, represented by only one course is difficult to ascertain. The importance of the engraved slab lies in the fact that it appears to be the only authentic evidence of neolithic art in India with a definite chronological horizon. Another stone slab with a tectiform engraved on its has also been found. "The engraved scene is the first find of a graphic representation of neolithic life from a regular stratified excavation in India. Also it is the first indubitable example of neolithic art in India, for other examples have been dated differently by scholars. The scene probably portrays one of the principal occupation of the Burzahom people in the Kashmir valley during the 2nd millenium B.C. There are glimpses of the weapons and the dress, the use of bow and arrow is proved beyond doubt. This is also attested by the recovery of hundreds of arrow and spear heads in bone".

The engraved slab has a maximum width of 70 cms and is irregularly cut. The engraved portion covers two human figures hunting a stage which, is the main figure of the hunt. One person is attacking it from the front with a bow and arrow with an unusual pose for releasing it. The bow appears to be of the simple segment type so commonly used in neolithic times. The other figure with a height of 13cm stands akimbo is attaking the animal from behind. The principal figure of the hunt 13cm in length and 13cm in height is the stag (servus elaphus) has a spotted or a striped body and the antler is many branched as is usually the case. The attacking figure from behind is that of a female and the spear has almost pierced the body. 'In the upper register of the engraved slab are shown a dog, which seems to be a domesticated one. It is apparent that the dogs formed part of the hunting party. There are two symbols also, which are alike. These comprise two concentric circles, with sixteen radiating lines all around. One of these on the right is partially damaged. These represent the sun.

As it is, the engraved slab indicates a realistic representation of the hunt. But one or two points demand special attention. The exaggerated genitals in the human male and the animal figures of the dog and the stag represented in the scene may convey the prevalence of some sort of phallicism or fertility concept among the neolithic community at Burzahom. It is also clear that women also participated in the hunt.

It may, however, be emphasized that another stone slab duty engraved has been found from the tank like structure detailed out above. The engraving represents a complicated design forming an incomplete pattern. The stone slab is broken at the edges and is roughly triangular or conical in appearance. As stated in the case of the stone slab bearing the hunting scene, this engraving is from a stratified level which makes it an important evidence of neolithic art from Burzahom. An expert who made a special study of this engraving also makes it out that "the pattern or design seems to be an abstract representation of a hut with a thatched domical roof and a prominent broom-shaped spire. On the drum portion of the hut to the proper right the hind portion of an animal and its tail can be seen clearly. The entire figure is highly stylized and abstract and can be identified as a 'tectiform', commonly depicted in Palaeolithic rock-paintings and engravings found elsewhere".

Without underestimating the importance of the two engraved stone slabs, what is striking is that the way these were used in forming the tank like structure indicates that their importance had been lost. Both the slabs were used along with other ordinary slabs in the structure. Besides, the slab with the hunting scene was placed upside down with the engraving facing inwards. Under the circumstances no magico-religious practices can be inferred at this stage. This is further confirmed by the absence of any such graphic art at Gufkral in Tral tehsil, where a similar neolithic site as at Burzahom was excavated in 1981-82 by the Prehistory Branch of the Survey. In the surface explorations conducted during my tenure in Srinagar Circle or by different Research Organizations in the Valley, no comparable specimen has been traced or reported so far.

The Pottery sequence at Burzahom is quite distinctive and reflective of the technical advances made by virtue of contacts and requirements induced by life styles. At the earliest level of occupation in N.P.I, no Pottery is in evidence. This is the Aceramic Gap. The Aaceramic Gap at the earliest level of occupation is more in evidence at Gufkral in Tehsil Tral which is a kindred neolithic site in the valley properly excavated. Inspite of the fact that they could fashion polished tools in bone and stone, the art and craft of making Pottery is not in evidence. At Burzahom without much time lag, proficiency in making pots is clearly established. The wheel was not within their capacity and the pottery is hand made. The Pottery specimens in the beginning are crude. They were not adept at mixing of the ingredients with clay in proper proportion or firing the pots at reasonable temperatures.

The pottery found indicates that these were made by 'Coiling' and 'strip' techniques. Coils were placed one above the other, each being pressed and smeared till these got joined. The desired shape of the Pot could be obtained by adding the appropriate number of coils till the desired shape was obtained. In the strip technique the Pots were placed on a mat, which was rotated to a obtain the desired shape. In the process such pots carried mat impressions at the base. That mat impressions on some pots have fanciful designs indicating that varied types of mats were in use and in vogue. Similar mats are even now in use in Kashmir.

Further advance in Pottery making is in evidence with the Presence of fine grey ware and burnished ware. In the burnished ware, due to repeated rubbing the external surfaces of the Pots bear a smooth and lustrous look. Even external decorations have been noticed on various pots. On a dish type ornamentation of a peacock has been worked out which is distinctive. The usual types in burnished ware are long necked jars, vases, surahis, basins, bowls, dish on stand etc. In the burnished black ware a graceful type is a high necked jar with a splayed out rim and a globular body.

Profusion of Pottery types is in evidence. Overlapping of Pottery types from one stratum to another suggests continuous occupation of the site. The broad changes in shapes, techniques and decorative motifs indicate changes in cultural patterns at the social level. In N.P.II with the emergence of burnished ware, an advanced technique is reflected both in Polishing and manufacture of various types. In fact it is the deluxe ware of the period and demonstrates a complete change in style from other fabrics and types of pottery.

It can safely be assumed that changes in advanced pottery techniques were induced by contacts and trade. This is confirmed by the discovery of a painted Pot with a horned deity painted on its shoulders. It resembles a wild goat with long curved horns and hanging ears. It has an almost exact parallel in Kot Diji and Gumla with Harappan and Pre-Harappan affinities. The space within these is covered by rosettes. There is also a wavy pattern. This pot has been found in the early levels of N.P.II at Burzahom and can be placed in the early levels of 2nd millenium B.C. (about1700 B.C.). This is therefore the substantive proof of contact with the existing Harappan culture. No painted pottery has been found at Burzahom or at Gufkral in Tehsil Tral which is a kindred neolithic site.

The above inference is further confirmed by the find of 950 beads from a redware pot from the later levels of Neolithic Period II. Surprisingly enough, the pot was sealed by a thick and hard layer of mud deposit (floor) which when removed revealed a hoard of 950 beads in agate and carnelian within it, which too are not related to the site. Besides these, a few barbed arrowheads with the mid-rib, a ring and a bangle in copper from N.P.II clearly indicate an intrusion from the contemporary culture or cultures with Harappan or Pre-Harappan affinities. A colleage of mine, Shri B.M. Pande, who has made a special study of beads in carnelian, agate, gold, steatite and bone from various levels found during the course of excavations at Burzahom has claimed, the bigger hoard comprising of 950 beads was found in a Pot carefully placed in a Pit sealed by a hard layer of mud; beads of the other hoard though not found in a pot were all found together and may have formed part of one collection. These beads are clearly different in terms of material, form and finish and in view of the fact that majority of carnelian and all agate and gold beads were found in hoards and also because carnelian, agate are not locally available, it is likely that these were not locally manufactured and are exotic to Burzahom. The fact that the hoard of 950 beads were kept in a red ware Pot along with another Pot of indubitable Kot Diji affiliation and since some of the beads have parallels in Harappan beads, it is therefore, quite likely that these, including the steatite beads, are imports from some Harappan site.

Mr. Pande has also referred in his detailed Report on the beads to the find of a polished bone or ivory rectangular object with a hole at one end and having a set of two concentric circles with a dot on both faces. This dot within double concentric circles is quite common decoration in Harappan ivory combs as well as some other objects. Interaction and inter-relationship between Kashmir Neolithic and early and mature Harappan culture is clearly discernible besides other cultures elsewhere.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND RITUALISTIC PRACTICES

We are absolutely in the dark about the religious beliefs of the people at the earliest habitation levels of N.P.I. There is no evidence, whatsoever, of any organized religion at the earliest level. Unfortunately no burials of either human beings or animals have been found in N.P.I. Even at Gufkral which is a kindred neolithic site, no burials have been reported at any level by the excavators. As already stated, Period I of the neolithic Burzahom did not yield any burials. The burials would have given us glimpses of the ritualistic practices of Earliest Kashmiris who initiated a settled way of life. It is the cult of the dead which initiated the prehistoric man to magico-religious practices.

There is no evidence of any cremation in the habitation area either. Total absence of burials in this Period suggests that people during this phase practised some other mode of disposal of the dead. It is quite likely that they either buried the dead or cremated outside the settlement. However, it has to be emphasized that Prolific use of red ochre is in use, as a decorative element or used on surfacing the floors. The Burzahomese were just battling for survival, living in underground shelters, primarily eking out a living by hunting, fishing and fowling. They struggled hard but they developed the skill of fashioning adequate tools in bone and stone to this effect.

As time advanced, a remarkable change has taken place as we step into N.P.II. There is a cultural shift and a definite advance. This may have been due to contacts and interrelationships with the adjoining regions both in the North, West and South. This speaks of admirable courage in traversing difficult terrains, hemmed in as they were by Himalayan Heights which they crossed to acquire more skills, develop trade relations and establish interrelationships with other cultures. There were no stable means of communication, but they braved all rigours for a better way of life. More about it will follow later.

In the northern neolithic region of the Indian sub-continent, Burzahom occupies an unique position in revealing human and unique animal burials in all details dating back to the earlier levels of 2nd millenium B.C. This happened in N.P. II. It is apparent that with Harappan contacts and other regions in the North, deliberate burials have started. The Burzahom burials assume special importance in the neolithic context because these are from stratified chronological horizon. The system of burying the dead provides some indication of the religious beliefs of the people and the ritualistic practices in vogue. As in the case of the humans, no animal burials in N.P.I which is the earliest level of occupation at Burzahom have been found. We are on firmer ground in N.P.II. So far as the animal burials from Burzahom are concerned, it was for the first time in the Indian sub-continent that so many systematic burials of animals, both animals buried separately and animals buried with human beings, were encountered and studied by specialists. Dog, wolf, and Himalayan Ibex received special attention. There is ample evidence to substantiate that animals were scarified to honour the dead. It is apparent that some religious beliefs have taken root in the settlement. Pet aniamls like dogs, antlers and goats were interred with the human body. In another grave Pit, five skulls of wild dogs, fragmentary bones represented by ribs, limb bones, pelvic girdles and horns of antler were found buried. It clealry indicates that some special ritualistic practice needed the sacrifice of a few animals in token thereof. Sometime, the pet animals like dogs and wolves were buried singly or in twos. In another burial two dogs buried at different levels in the same pit were found. Another distinctive feature of the animal burials is that the dead were generally buried in regularly dug out grave pits within the habitational area as was done in the case of human burials. Some of these pits were plastered with chunam and sometimes the pet animals especially dogs were buried within the house compound. Burial of pet animals and in some cases with those of masters is unique. It is foreign to Indian tradition. Prof. Alchin, a noted archaeologist has reported in his Birth of Indian Civilization "that the dog was apparently almost a cult animal in the shilka cave culture of the upper amur; and dogs were until recently sacrified and buried with their owners among such peoples as the Gilyaks, Ulchis and Goldis of this region".

It is also clear that the dog had a special place for the Burzahomese right from the day he settled in the valley. This is further substantiated with the finding of a burial in N.P.II where the dog is buried with the owner in the house floor, preferably the compound. He has depicted him in the engraving on the stone slab already stated earlier. The dog guarded his herd and helped him in pursuing the hunt on which his sustenance depended.

"At Burzahom from the neolithic period bones of dog (canis familiaris Linn), Kashmir stag (Cervus elaphus hanglu wagner), wild boar (Sus Scrofa Linn), domestic pig (Sus cristatus Wagner), wolf (Canis Lupas Linn), nilgai (Boselaphus trago camellus Pallas), Gaur (Bos garus H.Smith), the domestic humped cattle (Bos indicus Linn), the Indian bison (Bubalus bulalis Linn) Wild urial (Ovis orientalis Vignei Blyth), the Argalli (Ovis ammon Linn), domestic goat (Capra hircus Linn) and domstic sheep (Ovis Orientalis Gwelin) have been identified. Gaur has been recorded for the first time in Kashmir which is now extinct). All these species including the wild sheep continued to occur during the megalithic period".

Apart from the distinctive animal burials from Burzahom already detailed out, human burials from N.P.II and the subsequent megalithic period have been found. In all ten human burials were excavated. Of these five were males, three were females, one juvenile and one was that of a Young kid. Common features are the occurrence of all the burials in egg shaped oval pits, narrower at the top and wider at the base. The pits had been plastered with chunam on the inner side, the diameters varying from 1' to 6'8", save in the case of a child. Filling of the pit mostly consisted of ash mixed with stone pieces and pot-sherds. Animal bones were deposited alogwith the human internments in one case. Skulls had been placed either towards north-east or south-east, exceptions being the case of a child and an extended burial where skull was placed towards west.

In relation to the primary internments, skeletons were placed in an embryonic position in an articulated condition while in the fourth case, exceptionally, the skeleton was placed in an extended position at a depth of 3.0m. Here the orientation of the skeleton was south-west (skull) to north-east, unlike the other burials of this phase. The skull was found in a mutilated condition due to the fact that stone pieces were thrust on it. Of some importance is the burial of a grown up adult, a female which had five carnelian beads in the neck region. Carnelian beads are exotic to Burzahom, since the material is not available in Kashmir. The carnelian necklance is apparently an import from some site with Harappan and pre-Harappan affinities. It also suggests that the consideration for the dead leading to specific burial practices in N.P.II in the habitational area may have been influenced by contacts with the Harappans. It has already been emphasized that no burials, animal or human, Primary or secondary have been found in N.P.I at Burzahom.

Another primary internment is of striking importance. In this case all the bones were treated with red ochre unlike other primary burials. The body was kept at a depth of 2.20m in an oval pit in a crouching position. The grave pit was plastered with chunam in the interior and sealed by a yellowish floor. The most interesting features of this burial were the trephining marks on the skull. "Seven finished and four unfinished holes were trepanned in the normal ateralis position on the parietal bone between bragma and lambda. None of the holes indicated any sign of healing. These were probably made to obtain fetishes. Some sort of surgical operation also cannot be ruled out." The intact condition of the bones was indicative of the fact that the red ochre solution should have been sprinkled after the decomposition of the flesh, thereby meaning that the burial was opened again for this purpose. In the same pit fragments of animal bones particularly skull and horn pieces of an antler were buried at different levels. An animal lower jaw treated with red ochre was also recovered from the same pit. The only associate antiquity was a soapstone circular flat disc with three linear perforations.

Only two secondary burials in the human burial series were found during excavations. From the portion of various bones it appears that the skeletons must have been bare of flesh, before being placed in position. The bodies must have been exposed for some time, before it was decided to select the bones for internment. Mostly skull and bones collected after the process of desiccation were interred after being treated with red ochre. In another case of a secondary burial where the bones were treated with red ochre, a peculiar feature observed was the presence of two long conical stones placed in inclining position towards the leg region on the top of the pit. Hands and legs were folded up at the ankle and knee points respectively. An earthen pot filled with red ochre paste was noticed outside the pit in the same layer. The only antiquity recovered from this grave was a barrel shaped paste bead. In the second case of the secondary burial, the skull and long bones were deposited in a cluster after treating these with red ochre solution. The skeleton was placed towards north-east of the pit.

It may be emphasized that the megalithic site of Burzahom was excavated intensively and extensively and in technical language, vertically and horizontally from 1960 to 1971. By virtue of this field work we had very nearly a composite picture of the Earliest Kashmiris at the neolithic level, when they initiated a settled way of life. The neolithic people were succeeded by a people who installed huge monolithic stones (menhirs) in a new cultural sequence probably to commemorate some important event in the community. It is a new wave in Kashmir with new concepts. This is the megalithic period who succeeded the neolithic Burzahomese. In 1971 I was transferred to be in charge of N.W. circle which was a major circle at that stage covering five states. As such the "megalithic assignment could not be pursued in depth and detail. We are at a dead end now because of political intensities. We are thus hoping that a breakthrough may be possible in the near future. The importance of the Megalithic sequence will be detailed out as the narrative proceeds.

NEOLITHIC SITE AT GUFKRAL

The neolithic sequence determined at Burzahom was confirmed during the excavations conducted at Gufkral in Tehsil Tral, District Pulwama which had been discovered by us under "operation Jhelum" as stated earlier. The Gufkral megalithic site is a kindred neolithic site as at Burzahom. This site was excavated by Dr. A. K. Sharma and Dr. Bannerjee of the Prehistory Branch of the Survey during 1981-82. The site at Gufkral is 41 kms southeast of Srinagar. It can be approached by Avantipur Dadsar Tral road. It is located on an extensive deposit of 'Upper-Karewa' adjacent to the village Bani-Mir in between two nallahs.

The archaeological mound at Gufkral is a distinctive one. It is 400m long north-south and 75m wide east-west. Maximum height of the mound is 35m, capped by the largest group of menhirs sixteen in number which forms the megalithic complex at the site. Almost all of these have fallen, and none of these is in its original position. These are confined to the eastern side. Concentration of menhirs in close proximity of each other is very distinctive compared to other megalithic sites elsewhere. The pattern formed is out of focus because most of these have fallen and are not in position.

The cultural sequence is exactly as at Burzahom except for the fact that the Aceramic level is more defined here than at Burzahom. This was surmised at Burzahom but confirmed at Gufkral. The excavation at Gufkral clearly establishes that the manufacture of Pottery was not known at the earliest level of occupation. It is in this period that the process of domestication of selected species of animals was attempted. The structural pattern of the Aceramic period is marked by shallow, deep oval or circular and rectangular dwelling pits. The people had also recognized the food value of various grains like wheat and barley. The gains identified were wheat, barely and lentil as already determined at Burzahom. The top strata of this period according to 14C dataes is 2470 B.C. against 2375± 120 B.C. of Burzahom. Their main occupation is hunting, as confirmed by the tools found. They kept the floors tidy and beautiful by making prolific use of red ochre.

As time advanced, minor modifications in the structural pattern have been observed. Mud and rubble walls have been found. Polished bone tools as at Burzahom are in evidence. In the fully mature neolithic levels, thick whitish floors plastered with chunam mixed with earth have been observed. There was now sufficient variety in wares and in either decoration. There was sudden spurt in the domestication of animals. Agriculture was fully established. Weaving of woollen cloth had started. The significant discovery was of a spindle whorl both in stone and pottery. This is indicative of the knowledge of weaving and spinning of woollen cloth. The presence of bodkins or needles or grooved Poker type of bone tools also helped the people in stitching these clothes, which were needed in a cold region like Kashmir. Harappan contacts in this period have been established with the discovery of a pin with flattened coiled head in copper besides the recovery of a few carnelian beads which are exotic to the site. Wheel turned black burnished ware was also reported from the closing phase of this period when the grains of rice (date able to 1000 B.C.) have also been reported. Domestication of the animals was in full swing. The addition was that of a Pig. The excavation has also confirmed that the cultural material of the site suggests that the neolithic people of Kashmir led a settled life.

The above is a short summary of a long story. It is the story of the Earliest Kashmiris in the valley who initiated a settled way of life after the lakes had drained out, braving all rigours and inadequacies. Who were they? Did they intrude into the valley from the adjoining areas or did they evolve from a cruder and earlier Lithic Age, technically nomenclatured as Palaeolithic Age, before they landed on the commanding heights of the Karewas to establish a new way of life, a new way of subsistence, and be the harbingers of the "Neolithic (New Stone Age) Revolution" which was emerging as a new wave in human evolution. What were their extra territorial affinities, their interrelationships, which influenced their living patterns. Before we get into these Knotty Problems, it is obligatory to have a peep into 'Megalithic Kashmir' which reveals a new wave of thinking in the valley, potentially loaded in as much as the new wave considerably influenced the successive generations. It has already been emphasized that the Megalithic period at Burzahom as also at Gufkral followed the Neolithic Sequence.

MEGALITHIC KASHMIR

The megalithic culture at Burzahom like the neolithic culture does not bear any affinity with such of the representative sites in the Sub-continent. This period follows the neolithic sequence at the excavated sites of Burzahom and Gufkral. The explorations conducted during my tenure in Srinagar Circle proved very productive in locating a number of such sites in the valley. These have been supplemented during field operations by a few Research Organizations. What is of particular importance is that the megalithic complex in the valley is represented by 'Menhirs' only. 'Menhirs' are free standing stones, massive, tall, mostly many tons in weight, which needed intensive community effort in hewing these by contrasting temperatures from the distant hills and hauling these over long distances through difficult terrain. Installing these on high Karewas needed tremendous effort and considerable patience and skill. Mostly these upright stones are found in groups and in exceptional cases are located alone. It has also been observed that at some places these menhirs are overlying the neolithic settlements as at Burzahom, Gufkral, Hariparigom, Begagund, Brah etc; while at Waztal, Tarakpur, Sombur, Pampur, Dadsar, no such earlier remains have been found. The menhirs though roughly shaped and generally tapering towards the top are of varying sizes. The longest one at Gufkral is 6.55 mts long and the smallest size is 2.90 mts. At Gufkral, we have the largest number, sixteen in all compared to Burzahom. But these have mostly fallen on the ground, some due to human vandalism and some by natural catastrophe. At Burzahom, the menhirs are comparatively lesser, hardly half a dozen, but the weight is striking. The pattern formed is some sort of a semi-circle. Some of the menhirs carry cup marks also.

The installation of such massive menhirs both at Burzahom and Gufkral indicates a new wave in Kashmir. The cultural sequence at both the sites reveals that these were erected towards the end of the neolithic period. It has already been stated that the megalithic sites in the form of menhirs are densely distributed in the valley. New ideas have suddenly flowered and taken hold. Something revolutionary has happened. The purpose of erecting such massive menhirs which required the maximum physical and mental concentration has proved to be elusive. This needs serious pursuit.

We are confronted with the problem of a 'New Wave' in Kashmir, but there is no evidence both at the excavated sites at Burzahom and Gufkral to substantiate that there is any foreign intrusion, though some influx is discernible. There is no cultural conflict and there is full assimilation. The same types of tools in bone and stone are in evidence, but there is deterioration in finish and incidence. The fabric is poor. Wheel made gritty red wares dominate. The main representative shapes are storage pots with bulbous bodies of a coarse fabric, probably for storing grain. Very little evidence of iron has come from Burzahom, but Gufkral has proved to be productive. The megalithic complexes represented by 'Menhirs' fall into the general time bracket of 1000-700 B.C.(uncalibrated) and are non-funerary in character. Wheel made pots are in abundance. No doubt the percentage of bone tools decreased but new finds were marked by bone handles made mostly from tibia of the sheep or goat. A fine cobbler's awl was also recovered. Rice which is reported to have be been introduced here was cultivated in abundance in this period. This is in evidence at Gufkral. Against this the investigation of botanical remains at Burzahom has not yielded any grains of rice. Summarizing the results of the investigations it has been stated that "as wheat and barley are found from neolithic to megalithic period at Burzahom and in the upper neolithic phase of Gufkral it can be assumed that rice was introduced sometime around 1000 B.C. because of some change in the climate and/or subsistence practices. It also appears that the introduction of rice culture has taken place from Indo Gangetic area alongwith the migration of the people".

Structural remains at both the sites of Burzahom and Gufkral during the megalithic period are marked by rubble stone constructions which is a noteworthy change from the earlier type of construction in the neolithic level. However, at Burzahom the remains of a community centre in rubble with imposing dimensions have been found which has its own importance. Some traces of community centres have been detected from the mid-levels of the earlier N.P.II with imposing wooden superstructures. The importance of going in for community centres as time advances right into the megalithic period clearly indicates some change at the social level culminating in the installation of massive menhirs, probably also indicating some influx.

Megalithic sites are distinctive because of their identification in various parts of the world, with varied cultural horizons in different chronological framework. Megaliths are the most remarkable prehistoric monuments.

In the sub-continent especially in Peninsular India megalithic culture is represented not only by menhirs but by different types of monuments such as cists, pit circles, dolmenoid cists, cistgraves, cairn circles, Urn burials, hood stones. Earlier these were considered to be centered in peninsular India, but by now these have been identified near Karachi, in N. West Frontier and Baluchistan in Pakistan, as also in Almora, Agra area, and in the districts of Mirzapur, Allahabad. In the north-east region, these are also found in Assam, and in the borders of Burma as also in Central India. In India megaliths are found with iron implements and the typical black and red ware ascribed to the Dravidians followed by Painted Grey Ware People ascribed to Aryans. It has also been reported that in some excavated sites, the stratigraphic evidence has shown that the megalithic remains follow without break upon the earlier Neolithic Chalocolithic culture dated 1000—1300 B.C.

The megaliths have world wide cultural contacts, but these do not follow uniform sequence of cultures. Even the purpose of installing massive menhirs in Kashmir remains enigmatic. The group of menhir type of stones have culminated into an impressive monument of stone-henge in plains of Salisbury, South England. "The experts believe that these menhirs in Europe were ceremonial stones which were installed by prehistoric people to represent the movement of the sun and the moon in relation to the sky". However, some sort of religious fervour must have impelled them to work so strenuously in erecting the remains of a large standing circle. Menhirs are found in many other places in Europe, concentration being at Carnac in France. The site at Carnac had finest monuments of alignment type arranged in groups each consisting of multiple rows, 10 to13 in number which ended at semi-circles of standing stones.

To detail out further on this subject is beyond the scope of this paper. It has however to be emphasized that megalithic monuments are generally funerary in character, but not always. What is significant is that the purpose of installing massive menhirs at Burzahom or at Gufkral has not been determined on any substantive evidence. Since menhirs are densely distributed in the valley, it is a new wave potentially loaded which has a bearing on our history. This is a subject which needs pursuit and dedicated research. We are hoping that Time may bear fruit.

As an excavator who supervised over the excavations at Burzahom for eleven long years during field seasons, I have a hunch. The installation of massive menhirs may be commemorative in character and may have been installed to commemorate some important event in the community. As the neolithic Burzahomese advanced with contacts and trade, the concept of a community centre in imposing dimensions with adequate superstructure is in evidence from the mid-levels of N.P.II. This continued in the megalithic period also where the remains of a rubble wall with imposing dimensions has been found. This could only have served the purpose of a community centre. The purpose of going in for community centres indicates a social change, a new wave. Besides, near the megalithic complex at Burzahom a huge pit was found which revealed charred bones of many animals. Apparently some animals had been sacrificed and put into a bonfire. This leads one to believe that the installation of menhirs may have some commemorative importance indicating also some influx since the cultivation of rice has started in a big way in the valley.

PRE NEOLITHIC MAN IN KASHMIR

Man started his career as a quadruped. That is how the story goes. In his struggle for survival, Man became a biped and started evolving as a tool maker which gave him the edge over other species. This is the Palaeolithic Age (Old stone Age) when he was constantly on the move in refining the technology which led to variations in the tool kit over the ages. Efforts are being made to get him on the basis of hazy and elusive traces left by him which are also indicative of the trials and tribulations he had to face in evolving a better way of life. This gets compounded in Kashmir because of the hilly terrain. Heavy climatic oscillations and the natural process of destruction and decay have undercut clear identification. The discovery of Early Stone Age tools at Pahalgam and elsewhere clearly shows that right from the Pleistocene times 'Man' lived in the area and slowly evolved. The harsh climatic conditions as per the evidence throughout the world never deterred 'Homo Sapiens' from occupying heavily snow covered and terribly hot mountains and deserts.

De Terra and Patterson came across the possible existence of prehistoric remains in the valley when a well fossilized tusk fragment was found on the way to the Shrine of Baba Rafi-ud-Din situated on an isolated hill at a height of 628' above the valley floor. Besides the top most deposit yielded limbs of bovids (antelope and Bos) which were half fossilized. What was however, striking was that one femur bone bore marks of artificial cutting attempted by a blunt knife. They felt that they were on the first foot print of 'Palaeolithic Man' Earlier they had come across flake implements in the brown clay near Pampur (ancient Padmapura) overlying the lake bed. These were determined as belonging to the middle Palaeolithic period. A similar patinated flake made of trap and reworked at a later date was found near Kargil by them. They were thus closing in on his elusive traces. It was surmised that this flake may have been a left over due to a Prehistoric wanderer or by somebody who had settled at Pampur. This is the earliest reference to an 'Early Man' over the Zojila area on the way to Ladakh which was a prospective route to China etc. These stray finds were pointers but not convincing enough for the presence of the 'Early Man' in the valley, because of daunting Himalayan heights and the rigours of the Ice Age. Earliest Stone Age tools had been found in the Sub-Himalayan valleys (north of Kashmir) of the Indus and its tributary the soan (or Sohan) in the Potwar area centred about Rawalpindi in Pakistan.

Initiated by the observations made by earlier Geologists, the trail was blazed by Prof. H.D. Sankalia assisted by two of my colleagues in the Survey, Shri S.L. Shali and Dr. R.K. Pant who took up the field work in the Liddar valley in 1969-71, and recovered a massive flake and a crude hand axe from well stratified deposits dating to the Second Glacial and Second Interglacial respectively. Since Pahalgam was first glaciated, Sankalia thought that in this period the valley was under a thick mantle of Ice making it well nigh impossible for the survival of any fauna or flora and so also Man. He, therefore, attributed these tools, the earliest in Asia, to the first interglacial period emphasizing that environmentally this period of glaciation was the best suitable period for Man to be in Kashmir. In 1970 R.V. Joshi of the Prehistory Branch of the Archaeological Survey and others recovered nine more tools from deposits attributable to the Second through Third Glacial Periods.

Sankalia and other members of his team combed the area further and found a Patinated tool, six choppers and three scrapers from the area. These were categorized as Early Palaeolithic tools.

These finds attracted considerable attention and archaeologists from India and abroad explored the Himalayan Flank, but no tools were found. This may be due to the fact that the 'Glacial Lake' drained out at a considerably later period on the Himalayan flank compared to the Pir Panjal flank where the tectonic uplift had raised the lake sediment to provide land for animals and plants, providing environmental compatibility for Early Man to survive and evolve.

Comparatively speaking, the first survey on the Pir Panjal flank proved very productive in pursuing the elusive traces of our Palaeolithic forbears. The exploratory survey yielded palaeoliths from Balla Pura (top terrace of Rembiara river) in Shopiyan tehsil, District Pulwama. Besides, a well worked out chopper with distinct flake scars, indicative of human touches was also picked up from the upper reaches of Sukhnag situated on Srinagar - Poonch link road to the east of Pir Panjal range. What is, however, very striking is that sporadic explorations at Balapura and Sukhnag have been rewarding and a distinct blade and burin industry has been reported which has an Upper Palaeolithic affiliation. It is presumed that probably this industry belongs to C. 18000 B.P. when a Palaeosol developed on the loess in response to the climatic amelioration in the valley. This microlithic tradition should have continued later into the Mesolithic times. Unfortunately no further links in this behalf have been found so far.

At Sombur, 12 miles south-east of Srinagar more than 100 artifacts were collected, demonstrating the use of prepared core technique in fabrication. This clearly shows that 'Early Man' was evolving as a tool maker.

Inspite of these sporadic finds, what is disquieting is that no representative Palaeolithic sites as such have been found so far. These sites, if any found, could have thrown a lot of light on the set up of the 'Early Man' who was evolving and grapling with his environment for an even life. These sites, if any, may have been effaced due to natural calamities. Man's life in Kashmir has been considerably affected due to uplifts in the Pir Panjal and Himalayan flanks, tectonic changes and extensive climatic oscillations which have affected his evolution for a settled way of life. Besides, the higher reaches of the valley have not been systematically explored to enable us to trace his foot prints relating to his evolution as a toolmaker.

Under the Research Projects conducted by Physical Research Laboratory and a few of the Universities, a new lithic industry was found at some of the newly explored sites like kulladur, Bhatchak, Tapribal, Huin in Baramulla district, Khan Sahib and Hab Sahib in Badgam District. The importance lies in the fact that Grinders and Pounders which have a clear neolithic affinity have been found in association with earlier lithic tools. "Further, an interesting observation was that at some of these sites, a lithic industry marked by huge chopper like discoidal cores, borers, flake knives and scrappers were found associated with the typical Neolithic industry". It has been reported that a detailed examination of the tools showed that there is a succession of Stone Age industries going back to the Palaeolithic times. It has also been asserted that the Neolithic Culture indicates technological affinities with the Preceding Stone Age cultures. So the hope of bridging the transition is in view.

The Palaeoclimatic researches have indicated that 20000-18000 B.P. was of climatic amelioration in the valley. It is presumed during such optimum climatic conditions that human settlements thrived in the valley as is indicated by Upper Palaeolithic sites from sombur and other areas.

We are, however, in a blind alley regarding sufficient evidence in relation to our Palaeolithic ancestore who evolved leading to a full fledged neolithic revolution. Only some surface and sporadic collections are there. No such Prehistoric Sites have been excavated so far. No palaeolithic shelters or potential shelters have been traced either. In the absence of any evidence of their shelters, it is presumed that perhaps they never lived at one place for long and may have been roaming all the time. He was there but we have not been able to get hold of him in depth and detail so far. He may have gone in for temporary shelters as is the practice with the gujjars who take the cattle for grazing in higher reaches. Present conditions are not conducive for field operations of such a kind. As time advances, we may have better luck in locating a few representative sites. As it is, we had better luck in relation to the Neolithic Revolution that took place in Kashmir as substantiated at Burzahom. This has opened up new vistas in relation to the Earliest Kashmiris who initiated a settled way of life.

AFFINITIES AND INTER-RELATIONSHIPS

A. Literary Evidence

In working out the affinities it may not be out of place to refer to the Nagas and Pisachas who were living in the Valley which even though partly swampy was fit for habitation after the lakes had drained out by virtue of uplifts, tectonic changes, climatic oscillations, the emergence of Vitasta (Jhelum) and related geological transformations. The Nilamata Purana and Rjatarangini refer to the Nagas and the Pisachas as two tribes, the Progeny of Kashyapa, as the original settlers. These records are the earliest literary references regarding our earliest ancestors. Whatever, their origin, they are said to have close contacts with the people living in the neighbouring regions. They used to go to these countries periodically and return to the valley whenever the climatic conditions were favourable. It appears that both these tribes inhabited the valley on different occasions. Despite barriers due to Himalayan heights, there was continuous movement to and fro depending on climatic fluctuations. Naturally these periodical movements had a wide ranging impact on cultural cross currents and inter-relationships.

The Nagas are reported to have been serpent worshipping non Aryan tribes of Ancient India. There are epigraphic, numismatic and literary evidences to show that there were Nagas in all parts of the country. They were in Kashmir before the advent of the Pisachas. Referring to the Nagas of Kashmir, it is reported that they were the aboriginals and lived in the valley before the Aryans. The Naga settlements may have thrived because of climatic amelioration. After the dessication of the primeval lake, and the emergence of river Vitasta, there were numerous, isolated, smaller big lakes, as also swampy areas which formed part of the environment, providing opportunities for the tribes for growth and effective settlement. It has to be emphasized that for the Earliest Settlers hunting was the most important aspect of their living. The presence of such areas and spots was taken as a mark of fruitfulness, prosperity and growth. The struggle for survival, growth, security and advancement is reflected in the literary traditions in the form of tribal movements within the valley.

The literary records make it out that the Nagas were driven out of the valley by the pisachas at the advent of winter, who used to come over here in great numbers to save themselves from the cold and inhospitable reaches of Karakoram and Pamir areas of Central Asia. These beliefs are in consonance with the changes in the lifestyle of the prehistoric people who adjusted according to the climatic amelioration in the valley. The Ice Age had come to an end and there were no biting winds during winter months as compared to some of the inhospitable regions of Central Asia.

Both the tribes used to live in the valley for six months each. Pisachas lived during winter months. In this connection a brief reference may be made to the special structural features in N.P.-II of the excavations conducted at Burzahom. The structures are mostly built with mud walls, as also in wattle and daub. It has been observed that the alignments of the walls and some of the structures have been altered off and on, which leads one to believe that these may have been deserted for some time and then re-used.

The Pisachas were nomads whose original home was far away in the deserts of Central Asia. They never remained in peace with the Nagas. The Nagas were brought over here to give resistance to the contemptuous Pisachas who had occupied a sizable portion of the land over the mountains. Their supremacy could be eliminated only when the Nagas and others came closer and worked out an arrangement for peaceful living with the Pisachas. As per literary records it appears that the immigration of the people took place from the Indo Gangetic belt. The Nagas and the fresh arrivals seem to have some working arrangement with the Pisachas, since they tried to please them with meat during their presence with the advent of winter which is still reflected in our rituals of *Khichri Amavasya* and *Gada Bata* (offeirngs of fish). Even at the time of their departure some offerings were made and observed as 'Pisacha Prayana'.

B. Archaeological Evidence

We are now on firm ground in stating that the 'Palaeolithic Man', the precursor of the 'Neolithic Man' was in the valley roaming rather freely. Though we have not got 'Him' in depth and detail, because no Palaeolithic sites or potential shelters have been located so far due to various factors, he was evolving and refining his technology towards a neolithic revolution.

In this connection there is an important lead. Palaeoclimatic research has shown that around 10,000 B.P. cooler conditions prevailed in the valley. This is the conventional starting Point of Holocene (recent) period. The period witnessed excessive rains which resulted in tremendous erosion of the land forcing the people to move to Sub-Himalayan region or Gobi deserts of Central Asia. Such cold conditions must have also been responsible for the extinction of animals like elephants and horses whose fossil remains have been obtained from the Karewa beds. On the archaeological side it is also substantiated by the absence of Mesolithic industry which would have indicated the full evolvement towards the neolithic concept. Palaeolithic sites or shelters may also have been lost during such climatic ravages.

It has been asserted that by 5000 B.P. climatic conditions again became warmer. More people came here in larger numbers with sophisticated and effective hunting techniques. They were not only hunters now, but primitive farmers as well. They then entered into the Neolithic the remains of which are spread far and wide.

Kashmir Neolithic Culture as represented by the excavations at Burzahom and at Gufkral Portrays a well stratified society capable of fixed settlement. The Neolithic revolution came in the valley in full form and style. They had their own indigenous style as is evident from the varieties of tools especially the bone tools which they fabricated with an astonishing economy of effort, perfection and high degree of standardisation.

The Neolithic Burzahomese remained isolated though, in view of the geographical constraints, hemmed in by the daunting Himalayan heights which encircled them, and despite limited means of communication, they spared no effort and initiative in coming into contact with outsiders, honing their skills in the process, assimilated new techniques, enriched their economy in whatever way it suited them as and when they came into contact with others.

The proliferation of archaeological sites coincided with climatic amelioration indicated by large population densities. There has been external stimulation, intrusion and frequent contacts with the people of the adjoining areas, where Neolithic settlements were also thriving. This actually influenced the course of cultural developments in the valley. The location of the region was favourable for external contacts. The numerous lakes rich in acquatic fauna and fast moving medium animals like deer, wolf, sheep, goat etc. provided favourable spots and material for sophisticated bone tools. The hand made pottery, burnished ware, stone and bone tools from the excavated neolithic sites, Burzahom in particular show close contacts with the Swat Valley. The Italian Archaeological Mission carried out excavations in the Swat Valley from 1961—68 under the leadership of S.Tucci. Staccul has worked out a general sequence of cultures in this valley. He finds close similarity in shapes and decorations with the handmade pottery with Burzahom N.P.II. But the stone tools are chipped and not polished like those of Burzahom. Staccul personally examined the wares from Burzahom and found remarkable similarities in the furnished black wares of the Swat Valley and Burzahom. The tradition of dwelling pits is known from the Neolitic Cultures of Soviet Russia, China and Japan, particularly, the practice of burying dogs with their masters and the use of perforated stone knives (harvesters) are characteristic traits of North Chinese Neolithic Culture. The burial practices as also the tool repertoire of the Burzahom Neolithic bear an affinity with the North Chinese Neolithic Culture. It is apparent that contacts with the adjoining regions left their indelible imprints on the neolithic people in Kashmir which had cultural affiliation to and fro.

The Burzahomese had proliferating contacts with the Central Asian Region. Two important routes led us to the West, North-West, North and North-east. One was via Urusha (Hazara) and the other via Zoji LA. South Turkeministan brought about a Neolithic revolution in the Central Asian Region. South Tajkistan is said to bear affinities with the Neolithic strata of Burzahom. The international burials of goat (in association with the fragmentary skeletons of two children) relate to eastern Central Asia, Southern Siberia and the Valley of Kashmir ascribable to Neolithic period.

There are substantial and fascinating parallels from the Neolithic sites of Pan-Po-tsun of Yangshao cultures in north-east China. Structural representation of neolithic houses on the pattern of Kashmir neolithic traditions are found here. These are round, square or rectangular. Inside walls and floors are plastered with a thin layer of clay. Almost all types of bone and stone tools as at Burzahom are found here. Perforated semi-lunar knives or harvesters as found primarily at Burzahom and marginally at Gufkral are the main Prototypes of stone tool assemblages. The harvester is found in bone and stone in our neolithic set-up. It went from China to Korea and Japan and establishes our relationship with the Chinese neolithic people. This material equipment of neolithic people of China advanced to the highlands of Manchuria, South of the Gobi and traversed to Sinkiang by way of Tarim Basin. The ancient route linking West Asia, Central Asia and China in the east was later followed by famous silk road which converged at Kashgar - the bigger Oasis in Tarim Basin. Both the northern and southern routes from China divided to reunite at Kashgar again. The southern route from here led across the Kun-Lun and Karakoram mountains to Gilgit and the Indus. However, both the routes were fostered in the subsequent periods by wide ranging missionary activities from China to India and vice versa in which Kashmir took a leading part. Regular contacts on these routes in the pre-historic period had left a profound and lasting effect on the transmission of ideas, trade and cultural interchange between China, Kashmir and Central Asia, north of the Great Wall in the Gobi desert and highlands of Manchuria. A dog burial with his master in Kashmir neolithic culture is reported in the Ang Ang Hsi culture of Manchuria. The bone and stone tool complex is associated with such traits as found in the Shilka valley of eastern Siberia. Here dog was an important animal of the Prehistoric man and his main occupation was fishing and hunting. Sinkiang till recently known as eastern Turkistan was a known place between India and China, joining Kashmir and ancient Gandhara with China's westernmost Province, Kansu. There were numerous routes from Sinkiang (ancient Turkistan) to Kashmir. In the recent field work in Sikkim, significant discoveries were made of neolithic stone tools like celts, adzes, harvesters, some with single or double perforations. The perforated stone harvesters have been found in North and Central China and are also present in Jomon neolithic phase in Japan and Korea. This demonstrates the cultural affinities between Kashmir, China and further east at that stage.

It also is now evident that the Harappans had contacts with the Neolithic people of Kashmir and the northernmost limit of the Harappan Culture is at Manda in Jammu. In the earlier narrative, already a reference has been made to a very interesting and significant find of a fine, globular, wheel made red-ware Pot recovered from the earlier levels of neolithic Period-II at Burzahom. It bears the painting in black of a wild goat with long curved horns and hanging ears. It is exotic to Burzahom and clearly indicates Harappan affinities. Besides, the hoards of 950 beads in carnelian and agate are foreign to Burzahom and are an import apart from a few other copper objects from Burzahom and Gufkral. However, the most important evidence of skeletal remains on Neolithic man from Kashmir and the Harappans bring out that they belonged to the same stock.

Aryans in Kashmir

From an archaeological point of view the Aryans in Kashmir are a misnomer. In the regular excavations conducted at Burzahom or at Gufkral, Vedic Aryans as such have not been traced. At both the sites we have absolute evidence about the 'Neolithic Revolution' that took place in Kashmir after the lakes drained out and the valley was fit for habitation. The Neolithic revolution was followed by a new wave in Kashmir in the form of installation of Menhirs which is technically the Megalithic Period. In the explorations conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India, or under the Palaeoclimatic Research Projects, no potential sites or surface traces of any kind relating to Vedic Aryans have been found or suspected. It may also be emphasized that in the Indian Sub-Continent Vedic Aryans as such have not been traced from archaeological excavations or explorations so far. Some sites pertaining to the Ramayana and the Mahabharata period have been reported. The Aryans continue to be a controversial problem. Attempts are being made to resolve this. But this is outside the scope of the present paper.

Assessment by the Anthropological Survey of India on Human Remains From Burzahom. Excerpts

"The Sivalik series of the Indian sub-continent is one of the richest in the world to yield evidence for hominid evolution. A very wide range of primate fossils, though fragmentary and mostly of Jaw and teeth, found in the Sivalik throw considerable light on the evolution of hominids. Infact, the find of Ramapithicus and its status on human origins has put India on the map of human evolution at a time depth of no less than 12 million years. As we come to the recent geological time, remains of the prehistoric man is at the most ten thousand years old."

"It is only with the human remains associated with nesolithic, harappan, chalcholithic, neolithic and megalithic finds that the antiquity of man in the sub-continent is authenticated by osseous evidence since about 5000 years. In this light, the study of the Burzahom neolithic human remains attains importance and is an addition to our knowledge of the neolithic man in India.

Burzahom is the northernmost excavated Neolithic Site of India. In India Neolithin cultures are mostly associated with the contemporary chalcolithic culture. In this respect the Neolithic culture of Kashmir Valley is comparatively free from Indian chalcolithic traits. The Neolithic culture of Burzahom is unique and has no parallel in the country.

At Burzahom the skeletal remains as individual burials, and hence many of those recovered were more or less complete burials. All the burials occur within the habitational area itself and just below the floors at a considerable depth. The burials showed both primary and secondary interments. A burial is called 'primary' if the body is not allowed to disarticulate prior to interment, as opposed to a 'secondary' burial which is defined as a method as a disposable of the dead subsequent to total or partial disarticulation of the skeleton.

It has been confirmed through radio carbon tests on different charcoal samples from Burzahom Neolithic Site that the Neolithic culture of Burzahom extended upto last quarter of the 3rd millennium B.C. The earliest occupation (I) which radio carbon dates indicate to be before c. 2357 B.C. The actual time scale for the Neolithic sites as evident C14 dating is C.2300-1500 B.C.

However, comparisons of the limited material available with samples of skulls that are chronologically and geographically nearer provide interesting lead for further investigation. From the foregoing account of metric and descriptive cranioscopic observations it may be suggested that in the Burzahom Neolithic period long headed dolichocranic individuals were the basic population. The major features of this group are: long and narrow head, protruding occiput, somewhat low receding forehead, medium to prominent supraorbital ridges, prominent glabella with distinct Postglabellar sulcus, high vertical porion height, and sturdy build with tall to medium stature.

The two female skulls differ from the male skull in the usual pattern of sexual dimorphism, but the proportions are mostly similar. There is no evidence of brachycranic skull in either sex.

Among the four skulls there is one male skull which deserves special attention for having greater cranial width, markedly wider bizygomatic and bymastoid breadth, very wide nasal width, very wide palatal width and low upper facial and nasal height. It is, however, difficult to state whether this particular cranium is merely an expected variant of the basic long headed element or it represents a different population group that immigrated into the area. Such variation, however, can be expected normally to show individual variation within a spectrum of variations in a single population group. And it will be too sweeping at this stage to predict from an isolated specimen that there was an influx of divergent population during Neolithic period at Burzahom. Moreover, there *was no evidence uncovered during the excavation to indicate any marked interruption or ethnic intrusion* throughout the period covered in this paper.

From comparisons of metric traits as recorded it seems to be a plausible conclusion to say that the Burzahom people are more similar to Harappan people from R 37 than to Neolithic people of Southern India. The resemblance of a number of morphological characters traced between the Burzahom series of the Neolithic culture and cemetery R 37 series of mature Harappan culture most probably reflects their genetic affinity, and probably hints toward one ethnic continuity. This suggests that inspite of culture drift the basic long headed element continued to exist.

Summing up, we may infer that the basic dolichocranic elements of the Neolithci Burzahom are morphologically fairly similar both in respect of cranial and postcranial bones.

The physical feature of this long headed people of Burzahom shows no appreciable difference from that of the Harappa R 37 people. We are inclined to assert that Burzahom crania are closer to Harappa R 37 crania than to Neolithic crania of southern India. The skeleton evidence thus points towards ethnic affinity between Harappa and Burzahom series and suggests ethnic continuity, in spite of cultural differences.

However, even though conclusions emerge, they may be regarded as tentative, since sample sizes are extremely small for Burzahom and other contemporary sites."

WHAT OUR GENES SAY...

Modern science has helped us trace our real origins. Satellite imagery shows that the Sarswati River is not a myth. There was once a river 1600 kilometers long, which ran from the Pir Panjal range to the Arabian Sea. Geological factors took away the glacial sources of the river and it dried up.

DNA tests have demonstrated that the Aryans belonged to India and did not come from Central Asia.

The native Aryans who lived along the river Sarswati and were called Sarswat Brahmins migrated to the Kashmir valley and are known as the Kashmiri Pandits.

They are not the lost tribe of Israel. Jews are Semitic people, quite different from the Aryans.

Kashmiri Pandits who migrated from the valley in the past spread to all parts of India and call themselves Sarswat Brahmins. They have forgotten their Kashmiri origin.

Inter-caste marriages and life in migrant camps are decimating the population of Kashmiri Pandits.

CHAPTER 2

THE GENETIC EVIDENCE

Baikunth Nath Sharga

INTRODUCTION OF AUTHOR

Dr. Baikunth Nath Sharga was born at Lucknow on 21st December 1938. He secured his MSc and Ph D degrees from the Lucknow University in 1962 and 1967 respectively. Starting his career as a Lecturer in Chemistry at Shia Post-Graduate College, Lucknow in 1967, he retired as a Reader in 1999.

He has authored the book 'Kashmiri Panditon ke Anmol Rattan' *in five volumes and made a definite contribution to the recording of contemporary history through biographical sketches of prominent Kashmiri Pandits. An avid writer, he has contributed more than 400 articles to journals and magazines of repute.*

He was President of the Kashmiri Association, Lucknow from 1996 to 1999 and Senior Vice President of the All India Kashmiri Samaj from 1997 to 2000.

Although the Kashmiri Pandits generally regard themselves to be the descendants of Kashyap Muni, but actually they are the descendants of those intellectual saints and sages who used to live on the banks of the mythological river Saraswati, who migrated to the Kashmir Valley, when this river became extinct around 2000 B.C.

SEARCH FOR SARSWATI RIVER

It would not be out of place to mention here that about 17 years back roughly 200 scientists and archeologists had undertaken a project to search for this legendary Saraswati river described in our ancient Sanskrit texts. Their hard work has proved conclusively, that the river adored in the Rig Veda and celebrated in the traditions of our country for thousands of years, is not a myth but a ground reality. According to Dr. S. Kalyanraman who is the director of the "Saraswati Nadi Shodh Prakalp" of Akhil Bhartiya. It has Sankalan Yojna, the scientific investigations conducted so far in this direction have established the causes and dates of the dislocation of the great river Saraswati, which was mightier than the Indus river.

Actually due to some tectonic disturbances'around 2500 B.C. there was a tilt in the terrain of north west India, resulting in migration of river Satluj westwards to join the Indus and of river Yamuna towards the east to join the Ganges. Because of this geological phenomenon the major sources of glacier waters were lost for the river Saraswati and it became extinct. The landsat and IRS-IC and I.D. Imageries, geological and ground water surveys have eloquently established the entire course of this holy river over a distance of 1600 kilometers from the Pir Panjal range upto the Arabian sea through the deserts of Rajasthan and Gujrat.

When this mighty river Saraswati dried up the learned people living on its banks known as Saraswat Brahmins then migrated to the Kashmir Valley in search of the ultimate truth. They started devoting their time to achieve excellence in sprituality and with the passage of time became repositors of wisdom and knowledge who were subsiquently called "Kashmiri Pandits" belonging to the pure Aryan race.

THE ARYANS WERE OF INDIAN ORIGIN

The British, in order to rule over India without much difficulty, then propagated the theory with the help of European scholars and historians that Aryans came to India on fast driven horse carriages from Central Asia, just to create a divide between north and south India, when actually they were the indigenous people and did not come from else where. Prof. Shivaji Singh former head of the Acient Indian History Department of the Gorakhpur

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University in a seminar held in Gorakhpur on 25th March 2001 spoke at length on the relevance of various theories regarding the origin, rise and fall of the Harappan civilization and the chronological controversies about our vedic literature. He very convincingly countered all such theories and their proponents, who are of the view that the Aryans came from Central Asia.

According to Dr. Singh D.N.A. testing on the people of Central Asia and European countries have proved to be similar: But they have no similarity with the D.N.As of the people belonging to this sub-continent. On the contrary the people of north India and south India have D.N.A. similarity, which proves that Aryans were of Indian origin. Moreover the mitochondria in the blood passes from one generation to the another and if the Aryans would have come from Central Asia or Iran as has been propagated quite often; then there should have been some similarity between the two blood groups. Its non-existence proves beyond doubt that the Aryans did not come from outside but were Indians of very superior breed with highly developed intellect and the Kashmiri Pandits belong to this stock.

ARE WE THE LOST TRIBE OF ISRAEL?

For the information of the learned readers, it must be mentioned here that Bernier and Younghusband without much authority propounded another unique theory that Kashmiri Pandits are the lost of tribe of Israel. They have also cited various examples in support of their contention that the Kashmiri language is derived from Hebrew and surnames like Raina, Kitchlu, Heptu, Varikoo, Nehru, etc. are similar to the surnames of the Jewish people. But while advancing such fallacious arguments they had completely forgotten that the civilization of India is much older than that of Israel and the Jews are Semitic people whereas the Kashmiri Pandits belong to the Aryan race and are altogether different people.

It should also be pointed out here that in November, 2002, Dr. Tudor Parfitt, the professor of Jewish Studies at London School of Oriental and African Studies, who is conducting an extensive research work on those lost tribes of Israel, paid a secret visit to Lucknow to collect blood samples of the Afridi Pathans living in and, around the mango belt of Malihabad. His visit was aimed at confirming the Jewish descent of Afridi Pathans and whether they are actually from a lost Israeli tribe. His research has revealed that they are the probable descendants of a small group of hereditary Israelite priests or Cohanim, who are now based mainly in Mumbai, Pune, Thane and Ahmedabad. Genetic carbon dating has revealed that they carry the unusual Moses gene found only in the male descendants of Aaron who was the elder brother of Moses. This makes it amply clear that the Kashmiri Pandits have no connection with the Jews whatsoever. So now there should be no confusion over this score in any quarter.

What is a community and how it is formed is again a million dollar question? A community can broadly be defined as a group of people with similar characteristics and traits. The modern researches in the field of genetic engineering have conclusively proved that genes play a very important role in developing the main characteristics of a person like his features, his colour of skin, his vital statistics and above all his mental aptitude. That is why now D.N.A. test is performed to establish the identity of a person, whenever there is any doubt about the same. Some other factors like customs, traditions, dress and language also distinguish a community and these are evolved over the years and become the symbols of their identification. But above all of them it is the gene which plays a most vital role in determining the basic characteristic of a person and his social behaviour.

INTERCASTE MARRIAGES

Now the main factor responsible for the prevailing identity crisis in the Kashmiri Pandits is their deviation from their centuries old established values on the one hand and adopting westernised and liberal way of living on the other, where even premarital and extra marital sex is not considered to be a taboo. Due to this revolutionary change in the outlook of our community in recent years, we now observe an alarming rise in the number of intercaste marriages in our community, which are disintegrating and degenerating our community at a fast pace thus creating an identity crisis in the community. Such marriages if not checked in time, will ultimately lead the community to extinction in the long run after distorting and finishing its distinct identity completely beyond recognition. The most unfortunate thing is that our national level leadership is feeling shy to come out with a clear cut policy on this vital issue concerning the community. Some of our community journals glorify such marriages for monetary considerations without realising the fact that by doing so they are actually cutting their own roots unknowingly.

A DECREASING POPULATION

The feedback which I regularly get in this respect from the migrant camps in Jammu and else where are also not very encouraging. There the death rate is much higher than the birth rate. Due to financial constraints and growing unemployment, the young boys and girls of the community are now marrying quite late in life and producing less children, with the result that the overall population of the Kashmiri Pandits is decreasing every year at a fast rate. The intercaste marriages, which are showing an upward trend in our community in recent years are further reducing our population and siphoning off our assets to other communities, thus leaving us high and dry. It is high time when we all should seriously think over where all this will ultimately lead us to. Will we be able to preserve our distinct cultural identity then without taking effective measures against this fast growing menace in our community? Some Pandit girls in utter frustration and due to economic compulsions have married even Muslim boys.

WE ARE SARSWAT BRAHMINS

The factors which are responsible for encouraging our boys and girls to go for intercaste alliances should be analysed threadbare as to what extra qualities they find in other communities which are lacking in us, so that proper corrective, measures could be taken in time to remove those shortcomings, just to control and check this trend to save the community from its complete disintegration beyond recognition. There were many races in India, which do not exist now. They became extinct with the passage of time. Now we read about them only in the books of history. Simply because they were not able to maintain their distinct identity and were lost in the vast sea of humanity due to intercaste marriages. The same thing happened with the Kashmiri Pandits who migrated from the Kashmir Valley during the rule of Sultan Sikandar (1389—1413) popularly known as Sikander Butshikan to different parts of India. Their descendants are still in Bengal, Kerala and Karnataka, call themselves Saraswat Brahmins. They have the same physique, features and the colour and even observe similar rituals and customs but they have completely lost their Kashmiri Pandit identity due to obvious reasons. Their ancestors perhaps out of fear in that period never disclosed their true identity so that they may not be identified and get killed by the fundamentalists. Because the conditions were much worse then that what they are now.

Here it should also be kept in mind that the ancestors of Justice Shambhu Nath Pandit, who was appointed as the first Indian Judge of the Calcutta High Court by Queen Victoria, were Kashmiri Pandits. His father Pandit Shiv Prasad Gaugai migrated from Kashmiri Mohalla, Lucknow to Calcutta around 1820. Some of his descendants in Kolkata now write Datta as their surname. Swami Vivekanand's original name was Narendra Nath Datta. His father was Sri Vishwa Nath Datta. The name of Sri Rama Krishna's holy consort was Sharda Devi, when Sharda Peeth is in Kashmir. This gives a hint about their link with Kashmir. This also clearly indicates that all the Saraswat Brahmins now living in different parts of the country are basically from the same stock.

A community, which does not believe in its past history and ignores it intentionally, can never have any future. The developed countries of the world had realised this fact long back. They fully understand the importance of documentation and because of that they were able to make rapid progress in every field, whereas we are lagging behind at least by 100 years in every sphere of life. The day we realise this naked truth our worst days would be over.

THE RICHNESS OF OUR CULTURE...

Kashmir was at the centre of the Puranic geography. It was located on the Meru mountain, which was the meeting point of the four continents known at that time.

The rulers of Kashmir extended their domain beyond the Kashmir valley. Durlabhavardhana ruled parts of Punjab and Afghanistan. Lalitaditya conquered most of north India, Central Asia and Tibet.

Patanjali, the author of the commentary on Panini's Ashtadhyayi also wrote the Yoga sutras and contributed to Ayurveda. Bharata Muni wrote the Natya Shastra, which elucidated the concept of rasa and provided an algorithmic approach to knowledge.

Kashmir contributed to cosmology and science through works like the Yoga Vasishta, to Tantric thought in both its strands of Shaivism and Vaishnavism, and to the spread of Buddhist ideas to China and Tibet.

It made exquisite contributions to architecture and painting, dance and music, literature and philosophy, right till the advent of Islam.

CHAPTER 3

CONTRIBUTIONS OF ANCIENT KASHMIR

Prof. Subhash Kak

INTRODUCTION OF AUTHOR

Prof. Subhash Kak is a world-renowned scientist and historian of ideas. Currently a professor at Louisiana State University, he has authored ten books and more than 250 research papers in the fields of information theory, quantum mechanics, neural networks and history of science. He has also written four books of poetry.

He has been awarded the Science Academy Medal of the Indian National Science Academy, the Goyal Prize, and the Distinguished Alumnus Award of the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. He was the National Fellow of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study during 2001-2002.

His books include In Search of the Cradle of Civilization, The Wishing Tree, The Gods Within, The Ashvamedha, The Secrets of Ishbar *and* Ek Taal Ek Darpan.

Kashmir's geographical location partly explains is cultural history. It may be that its natural beauty and temperate climate are the reasons that Kashmiris have a strong tradition in the arts, literature, painting, drama, and dance. Its relative isolation, the security provided by the ring of mountains around it, and its distance from the heartland of Indian culture in the plains of North India, might explain the originality of Kashmiri thought. Its climate and the long winters may explain the Kashmiri fascination for philosophical speculation.

KASHMIR AT THE CNETRE OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Kashmir is at the centre of the Puranic geography. In the Puranic conception, the earth's continents are arranged in the form of a lotus flower. Mt. Meru stands at the center of the world, the pericarp or seed-vessel of the flower, as it were, surrounded by circular ranges of mountains. Around Mt. Meru, like the petals of the lotus, are arranged four island-continents *(dvipas),* aligned to the four points of the compass: Uttarakuru to the north, Ketumala to the west, Bhadrashva to the east, and Bharata or Jambudvipa to the south. The meeting point of the continents is the Meru mountain, which is the high Himalayan region around Kashmir, Uttarakuru represents Central Asia including Tocharia, Ketumala is Iran and lands beyond, Bhadrashva is China and the Far East. Kashmir's centrality in this scheme was a recognition that it was a meeting ground for trade and ideas for the four main parts of the Old World. In fact it became more than a meeting ground, it was the land where an attempt was made to reconcile opposites by deeper analysis and bold conception.

Kashmir's nearness to rich trade routes brought it considerable wealth and emboldened Kashmirs to take Sanskrit culture out of the country as missionaries. Kashmiris also became interpreters of the Indian civilization and they authored many fundamental synthesizing and expository works. Some of these works are anonymous encyclopaedias, for many other works the author's name is known but the details of the life and circumstances in Kashmir are hardly remembered.

This essay presents an overview of the most important Kashmiri contributions to Indian culture, emphasizing some of the lesser known aspects of these contributions. Specifically, we consider the contributions to the arts, sciences, literature, and philosophy. Our historical assessment of Kashmiri culture is hampered by the nature of our records. The texts and objects of art do not always indicate their provenance and the connections with

Kashmir emerge only from indirect evidence. We are on sure ground when we come to Buddhist sources, the texts of the Kashmir Shaivism, and the names mentioned in the *Rajtarangiri* and other early narratives.

EARLY PERIOD

During the Vedic period, Kashmir appears to be an important region because it appears that the Mujavant mountain, the region where Soma grew, was located there. It is possible that in the Vedic era a large part of the valley was still under a lake. Kalhana's history begins with the Mahabharata War, but it is very hazy with regard to the events prior to the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka.

The great grammarian Panini lived in northwest Punjab not too far from Kashmir and the university at Taxila (Takshashila) was also close to the valley. At the time of Hiuen Tsang, Takshashila was a tributary to Kashmir. It is generally accepted that Patanjali, the great author of the Mahabhashya commentary on Panini's Ashtadhyayi, was a Kashmiri, as were a host of other grammarians like chandra. According to Bhartrihari and other early scholars, Patanjali also made contributions to Yoga (the yoga-sutras) and to Ayurveda.

It is believed that Patanjali's mother was named Gorika and he was born in Gonarda. He was educated in Takshashila and he taught in Pataliputra. From the textual references in his work, it can be safely said that he belonged to 2nd century BC.

Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* (River of Kings), written in about 1150, provides a narrative of successive dynasties that ruled Kashmir. Kalhana claimed to have used eleven earlier works as well the Nilamata Purana. Of these earlier books only the Nilamata Purana survives. The narrative in the Rajatarangini becomes more than mere names with the accession of the Karkota dynasty in the early seventh century.

The political boundaries of Kashmir have on occasion extended much beyond the valley and the adjoining regions. According to Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese traveller, the adjacent territories to the west and south down to the plains were also under the direct control of the king of Kashmir. With Durlabhavardhana of the Karkota dynasty, the power of Kashmir extended to parts of Punjab and Afghanistan. It appears that during this period of Kashmiri expansion the ruling elite, if not the general population, of Gilgit, Baltistan. and West Tibet spoke Kashmiri-related languages. Later, as Kashmir's political power declined, these groups were displaced by Tibetan speaking people.

In the eighth century. Lalitaditya (reigned 725-761), conquered most of north India. Central Asia and Tibet. His vision and exertions mark a new phase of Indian empire-building. Kashmir had become an important player in the rivalries amongst me various kingdoms of north India.

The jostling of the Kashmiri State within the circle of the north Indian powers led to an important political innovation. The important *Vishnudharmottara Purana,* believed to have been written in Kashmir of the Karkota kings, recommends innovations regarding the *rajasuya* and the *ashvamedha* sacrifices, of which the latter in its medieval interpretations was responsible for much warfare amongst kings. In the medieval times the horse was left free to roam for a year and the king's soldiers tried to establish the rule of their king in all regions visited by the horse, leading to fighting. The *Vishnudharmottara Purana* replaced these ancient rites by the *rajyabhisheka* (royal consecration) and *surapratishtha* (the fixing of the divine abode) rites.

The Charaka Samhita of Ayurveda that has come down to us is due to the editing of Dridhahala from Kashmir, who also added seventeen chapters to the sixth section and the whole of the eighth section. Patanjali may have been involved in this editing process. But it is likely that the identity of the Kashmiris as a distinct group had not solidified in the Vedic period and to speak of ethnicity at that time is meaningless.

In any event, Kashmir of these early times was a part of the larger northwest Indian region of which Takshashila was a center of learning. The early levels of buildings in Takshashila have been traced to 800 BC. The first millennium BC was a period of great intellectual activity in this part of India and attitudes that later came to be termed Kashmiri were an important element of this activity. Amongst these attitudes was a characteristic approach to classification in the arts and the interest in grammar.

Panini's grammar remains one of the greatest achievements of the human intellect. It described the grammar of the Sanskrit language by a system of 4,000 algebraic rules, a feat that has not been equaled for any other language to this day. It also set the tone for scientific studies in India with their emphasis on algorithmic explanations. Patanjali's commentary on the Panini grammar was responsible for the exaltation of its reputation. It appears that Panini arose in the same intellectual climate that characterized Kashmir during its Classical period.

DRAMA AND MUSIC: THE NATYA SHASTRA

An early name seen as belonging to Kashmir is Bharata Muni of the Natyashastra. The indirect reasons for this identification are that the *rasa* idea of the Natyashastra was discussed by many scholars in Kashmir. Another reason is that the Natyashastra has a total of 36 chapters and it is suggested that this number may have been deliberately chosen to conform to the theory of 36 *tattvas* which is a part of the later Shaivite system of Kashmir. Many descriptions in this book seem especially true for Kashmir. The *bhana,* a one-actor play described by Bharata is still performed in Kashmir by groups called *bhand pather (bhana patra,* in Sanskrit).

It should be mentioned here parenthetically that a few scholars take Bharata to be a Southerner. It is also interesting that there exist some very close connections between Kashmir and South India in the cultural tradition like the worship of Shiva, Pancharatra, Tantra, and the arts. Recently, when I pointed this out to Vasundhara Filliozat, the art historian who has worked on Karnataka, she said that the inscriptional evidence indicates a continuing movement of teachers from Kashmir to the South and that Kashmir is likely to have been the original source of many of the early Shaivite, Tantric, and Sthapatya Agamas.

Bharata Muni's *Natya Shastra* not only presents the language of creative expression, it is the world's first book on stagecraft. It is so comprehensive that it lists 108 different postures that can be combined to give the various movements of dance. Bharata's ideas are the key to proper understanding of Indian arts, music and sculpture. They provide an insight into how different Indian arts are expressions of a celebratory attitude to the universe.

Manomohan Ghosh, the modern translator of the Natya Shastra, believes that it belongs to the 5th century BC. He bases his assessment on the archaic pre-Paninian features of the language and the fact that Bharata mentions the arthashastra of Brihaspati and not that of the 4th century BC Kautilya.

The term *natya* is synonymous with drama. According to Bharata, the *natya* was created by taking elements from each of the four Vedas: recitation *(pathya)* from the Rigveda, song or melody *(gita)* from the Samaveda, acting *(abhinayd)* from the Yajurveda, and sentiments *(rasa}* from the Atharvaveda. By this synthesis, the Natya Shastra became the fifth Veda, meant to take the spirit of the Vedic vision to the common man. Elsewhere, Bharata says: "The entire nature of human beings as connected with the experiences of happiness and misery, and joy and sorrow, when presented through the process of histrionics *(abhinayd)* is called *natya*"

Five of the thirty-six chapters of the *Natya Shastra* are devoted to music. Bharata speaks of the 22 *shrutis* of the octave, the seven notes and the number *of shrutis* in each of them. He explains how the *vina* is to be tuned. He also describes the *dhruvapada* songs that were part of musical performances.

The concept of *rasa,* enduring sentiment, lies behind the aesthetics of the *Natya Shastra.* There are eight *rasas:* heroism, fury, wonder, love, mirth, compassion, disgust and terror. Bharata lists another 33 less permanent sentiments. The artist, through movement, voice, music or any other creative act, attempts to evoke them in the listener and the spectator. This evocation helps to plumb the depths of the soul, thereby facilitating self-knowledge.

The algorithmic approach to knowledge became the model for scientific theories in the Indie world, extending from India to the east and Southeast Asia. The ideas of the *Natya Shastra* were in consonance with this tradition and they provided an overarching comprehensiveness to sculpture, temple architecture, performance, dance and story telling. But unlike other technical shastras that were written for the scholar, Bharata's work influenced millions directly. For these reasons alone, the *Natya Shastra* is one of the most important books ever written.

To appreciate the pervasive influence of the *Natya Shastra,* just consider music. The comprehensiveness of the *Natya Shastra* forged a tradition of tremendous pride and resilience that survived the westward movement of Indian musical imagination through the agency of itinerant musicians. Several thousand Indian musicians, of which Kashmiri musicians are likely to have been a part, were invited by the fifth century Persian king Behram Gaur. Turkish armies used Indians as professional musicians.

Bharata stresses the transformative power of creative art. He says, "It teaches duty to those who have no sense of duty, love to those who are eager for its fulfillment, and it chastises those who are ill-bred or unruly, promotes self-restraint in those who are disciplined, gives courage to cowards, energy to heroic persons, enlightens men of poor intellect and gives wisdom to the learned."

Our life is spent learning one language or another. Words in themselves are not enough, we must learn the languages of relationships, ideas, music, games, business, power, and nature. There are some languages that one wishes did not exist, like that of evil. But evil, resulting from ignorance that makes one act like an animal, is a part of nature and it is best to recognize it so that one knows how to confront it. Creative art show us a way to transcend evil because of its ability to transform. This is why religious fanatics hate art.

COSMOLOGY AND SCIENCE: THE YOGA VASISHTHA

Another book from Kashmir which has had enduring influence over Indian thought is the Yoga Vasishtha (YV). Professing to be a book of instruction on the nature of consciousness, it has many fascinating passages on time, space, matter and cognition. They are significant not only in telling us about thinking in Kashmir, they summarize Indian ideas of physics, available to us through a variety of sources, that are not widely known outside scholarly circles. Starting with a position that seeks to unify space, time, matter, and consciousness, an argument is made for relativity of space and time, cyclic and recursively defined universes, and a non-anthropocentric view.

Within the Indian tradition it is believed that reality transcends the separate categories of space, time, matter, and observation. In this function, called *Brahman,* inhere all categories including knowledge. The conditioned mind can, by "tuning" in to *Brahman,* obtain knowledge, although it can only be expressed in terms of the associations already experienced by the mind. In this tradition, scientific knowledge describes as much aspects of outer reality as the topography of the mindscape. Connections *(bandhu)* between the outer and the inner are assumed: we can comprehend reality only because we are already equipped to do so. In other words, innate, primitive, *a priori* ideas give rational organization to our fragmentary sensations.

The Yoga-Vasishtha (YV) is over 29,000 verses long, and it is traditionally attributed to Valmiki, author of the epic Ramayana, which is over two thousand years old. But scholars believe it was composed in the early centuries in Kashmir. The historian of philosophy Dasgupta dated it about the sixth century AD on the basis that one of its verses appears to be copied from one of Kalidasa's plays, considering Kalidasa to have lived around the fifth century. But new theories support the view that the traditional date of Kalidasa is 50 BC. This means that the estimates regarding the age of YV are further muddled and it is possible that this text could be 2000 years old.

YV may be viewed as a book of philosophy or as a philosophical novel. It describes the instruction given by Vasishtha to Rama of the Ramayana. Its premise may be termed radical idealism and it is couched in a fashion that has many parallels with the notion of a participatory universe, where the actions of the conscious agents have a bearing on future evolution.

Its most interesting passages from the scientific point of view relate to the description of the nature of space, time, matter, and consciousness. It should be emphasized that the YV ideas do not stand in isolation. Similar ideas are to be found in the earlier Vedic books. At its deepest level the Vedic conception is to view reality in a unitary manner; at the next level one may speak of the dichotomy of mind and matter. Ideas similar to those found in YV are also encountered in the Puranic and Tantric literature. But the clarity and directness with which these ideas are described in YV is unique.

Roughly speaking, the Vedic system speaks of an interconnectedness between the observer and the observed. The

Vedic system of knowledge is based on a tripartite approach to the universe where connections exist in triples in categories of one group and across groups: sky, atmosphere, earth; object, medium, subject; future, present, past; and so on. Beyond the triples lies the transcendental "fourth".

Three kinds of motion are alluded to in the Vedic books: these are the translational motion, sound, and light which are taken to be "equivalent" to earth, air, and sky. The fourth motion is assigned to consciousness; and this is considered to be infinite in speed.

It is most interesting that the books in this Indian tradition speak about the relativity of time and space in a variety of ways. The Puranas speak of countless universes, time flowing at different rates for different observers and so on.

Universes defined recursively are described in the famous episode of Indra and the ants in Brahmavaivarta Purana, the Mahabharata, and elsewhere. These flights of imagination are to be traced to more than a straightforward generalization of the motions of the planets into a cyclic universe. They must be viewed in the background of an amazingly sophisticated tradition of cognitive and analytical thought.

The YV argues that whereas physical nature is taken to be analyzable it is defined only in relation to observers. Consciousness is considered a more fundamental category. But YV is not written as a systematic text. Its narrative jumps between various levels: psychological, biological, and physical, as is traditional in Indian texts. Not surprisingly, given the Vedic emphasis on *rta,* YV accepts the idea that laws are intrinsic to the universe. But do these laws remain constant? There is some suggestion that the laws of nature in an unfolding universe also evolve.

According to YV, new information does not emerge out of the inanimate world but it is a result of the exchange between mind and matter. It accepts consciousness as a kind of fundamental field that pervades the whole universe. One might speculate that the parallels between YV and some recent ideas of physics are a result of the degree of abstraction that is common to both; or one might assert that the parallels are a reflection of the inherent structure of the mind.

It appears that the Kashmiri understanding of physics was informed not only by astronomy and terrestrial experiments but also by speculative thought and by meditation on the nature of consciousness. Unfettered by either geocentric or anthropocentric views, this understanding unified the physics of the small with that of the large within a framework that included metaphysics. YV ideas do not represent a break with the older Vedic thought; they are an amplification of the basic themes informed by advances in the unfolding understanding of the astronomy and other physical sciences.

This was a framework consisting of innumerable worlds (solar systems), where time and space were continuous, matter was atomic, and consciousness was atomic, yet derived from an all-pervasive unity. The material atoms were defined first by their subtle form, called *tanmatra,* which was visualized as a potential, from which emerged the gross atoms. A central notion in this system was that all descriptions of reality are circumscribed by paradox. The universe was seen as dynamic, going through ceaseless change.

TANTRA: SHAIVISM AND VAISHNAVISM

The Kashmiri approach to the world is uniquely positive. There is a celebration of nature and beauty for the objective world is also a representation of *Brahman* (Lord). This approach is part of the Kashmiri tantric thought in both its strands of Shaivism and Vaishnavism. The Tantras stress the equivalence of the universe and the body and look for divinity within the person.

Although the Vaishnavite Panchratra now survives only in South India, the earliest teachers looked to Kashmir as the seat of learning and spiritual culture. The Pancharatra ontology and ritual are described in the Kashmirian *Vishnudharmotta Purana.* According to this theology, the king was enjoined to build a temple for the rites to be performed to celebrate his victory over his opponents. These rites marked his union with Vishnu. This represented an important milestone in the conceptualization of the role of the king in Indie thought.

According to Kalhana, the worship of Shiva in Kashmir dates prior to the Mauryan King Ashoka. The Tantras were enshrined in texts known as the Agamas, most of which are now lost. The pinnacle of the Tantric Shaiva tradition is the Trika system. The great spiritual master and scholar Abhinavagupta (c. 975-1025) describes the goal of the Shaiva discipline is to find freedom. In this freedom, the adept becomes one with Shiva, transcending all oppositions and polarities. *Thejivanamuka* (the liberated person) experiences the freedom of Shiva in a blissful and unitary vision of the all-pervasiveness of the Absolute.

Two very interesting ideas in Kashmir Shaivism are that of *recognition* and of *vibration.* In the philosophy of Recognition, it is proposed that the ultimate experience of enlightenment consists of a profound and irreversible recognition that one's own true identity is Shiva himself. The doctrine of Vibration speaks of the importance of experiencing *spanda,* the vibration or pulse of consciousness. Every activity in the universe, as well as sensations, cognitions, emotions ebbs and flows as part of the universal rhythm of the one reality, Shiva.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO BUDDHISM

Kashmir became an early centre of Buddhist scholarship. In the first century, the Kushan emperor Kanishka chose Kashmir as the venue of a major Buddhist Council comprising of over 500 monks and scholars. At this meeting the previously uncodified portions of Buddha's discourses and the theoretical portions of the canon were codified. The entire canon *(the Tripitaka)* was inscribed on copper plates and deposited in a stupa. The Buddhist schools of Sarvastivada, Mahayana, Madhyamika, and Yogachara were all well developed in Kashmir. It also produced famous Buddhist logicians such as Dinnaga, Dharmakirti, Vinitadeva. and Dharmottara.

Kashmiris were tireless in the spread of Buddhist ideas to Central Asia. Attracted by Kashmir's reputation as a great centre of scholarship, many Buddhists came from distant lands to learn Sanskrit and train as translators and teachers. Amongst these was Kumarajiva (344-413), the son of the Kuchean princess who, when his mother became a nun, followed her into monastic life at the age of seven. He came to Kashmir in his youth to learn the Mahayana scriptures from Bandhudatta. Later he became a specialist in Madhyamika philosophy. In 383, Chinese forces seized Kucha and carried Kumarajiva off to China. From 401 he was at the Ch'in court in the capital Chang'an (the modem Xi'an), where he taught and translated Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. More than 100 translations are attributed to him. His works include some of the most important titles in the Chinese Buddhist canon. Kumarajiva's career had an epoch-making influence on Chinese Buddhist thought, not only because he translated important texts that were previously unknown, but also because he did much to clarify Buddhist terminology and philosophical concepts. He and his disciples established the Chinese branch of the Madhyamika, known as the San-lun, or "Three Treatises school."

Kumarajiva's contemporary, the Kashmiri Buddhabhadra also went to China to translate the Buddhist texts. The Kashmiri Buddhasena translated a major Yogachara text into Chinese. Hiuen Tsang, the famous Chinese pilgrim, came to Kashmir in 631, staying for two years.

Many famous Buddhist Tantric teachers were associated with Kashmir. According to some Tibetan sources, Naropa and Padmasambhava (who introduced Tantric Buddhism into Tibet) were Kashmiris. The Tibetan script is derived from the Kashmiri Sharada script, It was brought into Tibet by Thonmi-Sambhota, who was sent to Kashmir during the reign of Duralabhavardhana (seventh century) to study with Devatitasimha.

ARCHITECTURE AND PAINTING

The uniqueness of the Kashmiri idiom in artistic expression has been recognized by historians. The ancient temple ruins in Kashmir are some of the oldest standing temples in India today (7th - 9th Centuries) and would have been among the most magnificent temples ever made in India. The sculptures found here are significant and exquisite.

The Martanda temple, built by Lalitaditya, is one of the earliest and yet largest stone temples to have been built in Kashmir. The temple is rectangular in plan, consisting of a mandapa and a shrine. Two other shrines flank the mandapa. It is enclosed by a vast courtyard by a peristyle wall with 84 secondary shrines in it. The columns of the peristyle are fluted. Each of the 84 niches originally contained an image of a form of Surya. The number 84, as 21 x 4, appears to have been derived from the numerical association of 21 with the sun.

Lalitaditya also built an enormous chaitya in the town of Parihasapura which housed an enormous Buddha. Only the plinth of this huge monument survives, although one of the paintings at Alchi is believed to be its representation. There was also an enormous stupa in Parihasapura built by Lalitaditya's minister Chankuna, which may have even been larger than the chaitya. The Parihasapura monuments became models for Buddhist architecture from Afghanistan to Japan.

The Pandrethan temple as well as the Avantipur complex provide us further examples of the excellence of Kashmiri architecture and art. Kashmiri ivories and metal images are also outstanding, and are generally considered to be among the best anywhere in the world.

Kashmir also had a flourishing tradition of painting, which must have been used to decorate the temples walls. The earliest surviving examples of these painting come from Gilgit and date from about 8th century. Representing a highly developed style, these paintings must be seen as belonging to a very old tradition. Kashmiri craftsmen were long famed for their work and their hand can be seen in many works of art in Central Asia and Tibet.

Although references to paintings in ancient Kashmiri literature are scattered, and because all records of painting in the Valley were destroyed after the advent of Islam, it is possible to piece together this tradition from the paintings that are preserved in the Buddhist temples of Ladakh and Tibet. The Tibetan scholar Rinchen Sangpo (950-1055) claimed to have visited Kashmir thrice to obtain the services of 75 Kashmiri craftsmen, painters and teachers to build and decorate one hundred and eight temples in Western Tibet According to the 16th century Tibetan scholar Lama Taranath, author of a history of Buddhism in India, there existed in the 9th century India four principal school of art: eastern, middle country, Marwar, and the Kashmiri.

The discovery of Gilgit manuscript paintings has deepened our understanding of Kashmiri painting. Although usually assigned to the Kashmir school of the 9th century, on stylistic grounds they may date even earlier as their nearest parallels are found in the 8th century stone sculpture of Pandrethan. Painted figures of Boddhisattva Padmapani from Gilgit demonstrates the mingling of the Gandharan and the Gupta Indian conventions with local elements The faces are typical Gandharan while the iconography and spirit is purely Indian

After Lalitaditya, Kashmiri style appears to have changed somewhat and it endured till 10-11th century This phase is the most developed stage of Kashmiri art with its fame spreading into the remote Himalayas.

The 9th century complex of Avantipura built by King Avantivarman (855-883 AD) is an amalgam of various earlier prevalent forms of India and regions beyond. The best example of this style is found in the bronzes dated to 9th to 11th century cast by Kashmiri craftsmen for Tibetan patrons The style of such bronzes presents a remarkable affinity to the wall-paintings dating to 10-11th century decorated in the Buddhist temples of Western Tibet.

The wall paintings of Mang nang and manuscript painting of Thaling discovered in Western Tibet are generally accepted to have been created by Kashmiri painters. Stylistically, they are a pictorial translation of contemporary Kashmiri bronzes. In the treatment of costumes and ornaments, the artists have meticulously executed the finest details of diaphenous and embroidered garments and intricate design. These wall paintings present a final stage of progression of the Kashmiri style which reminds something related to the distant Ajanta.

One of the best sites to see the Kashmiri painting style is in the five temples comprising the *dharma-mandala* at Alchi in Ladakh, which escaped destruction that other Ladakhi temples suffered at the hands of a Ladakhi king who embraced Islam. The earliest of these buildings is the 'Du-khang where one can see astonishingly well preserved mandalas that document the Kashmiri Buddhist pantheon as well as the Buddhist representation of the Hindu pantheon.

The Sum-tsek, a three-level building next to the 'Du-khang presents the native architectural tradition, characterized by piled-up rock walls faced with mud plaster, decorated with delicate wood carvings of the Kashmiri style. Triangular forms are a part of the pillars and other architectural elements in a style that corresponds to the motifs found on the stone monuments of Kashmir. The plan of the building contains three extensions on the east, north, and west where gigantic two-storied images of Avalokiteshvara, Maitreya and Manjushri to remove impurities in speech, mind, and body were situated. Elsewhere in the building is a most interesting painting of Prajnaparamita, identified by the book and the rosary she holds. A tall structure depicted on her sides appears to be the famous chaitya built by Lalitaditya at Parihasapura.

According to the historian of art Susan Huntington, "Kashmir served as a source of imagery and influence for the northern and eastern movements of Buddhist art. The Yunkang caves in China, the wall paintings from several sites in Inner Asia, especially Qizil and Tun-huang, the paintings from the cache at Tun-huang, and some iconographic manuscripts from Japan, for example, should be evaluated with Kashmir in mind as a possible source. A full understanding of the transmission of Buddhist art through Asia is dependent on developing a greater knowledge of Kashmiri art."

DANCE AND MUSIC

Kalhana, while speaking of Lalitaditya, narrates a charming story of how the king discovered the ruins of an old temple where he had a new temple built. While exercising his horse, Lalitaditya saw two beautiful, gazelle-eyed girls sing and dance every day at the same time. Upon questioning they told him that they were dancing girls who danced at the spot on the instructions of their mothers. Lalitaditya had the place dug up and he found two decayed temples with closed doors. Inside were images of Rama and Lakshmana. Clearly the tradition of temple dancing was an old one.

The paintings in Kashmiri style bring to us a clear idea of the temple dances which prevailed in Kashmir at the time when these paintings were made (1 Oth-11th Centuries). Indian classical dance in its different forms was born out of the tradition of dancing before the Lord in the temples. This representation of the dance forms enriches our knowledge of the culture of Kashmir and its close integrity to the rest of India. Kalhana mentions many kings who were interested in dance and music.

The only extant complete commentary on the Natya Shastra is the one by Abhinavagupta. The massive thirteenth-century text Sangitaratnakara ("Ocean of Music and Dance"), composed by the

Kashmiri theorist Shamgadeva, is one of the most important landmarks in Indian music history. It was composed in south-central India shortly before the conquest of this region by the Muslims and thus gives an account of Indian music before the full impact of Muslim influence. A large part of this work is devoted to marga. that is, the ancient music that includes the system of jatis and grama-ragas. Shamgadeva mentions a total of 264 ragas.

LITERATURE

We return to *rasa,* mentioned by Bharata Muni as the essence of artistic expression. In the poetic tradition, it is mentioned by Bhatta Lollata of the 9th century, the oldest commentator on the Natya Shastra whose views have come down to us. Other authors such as Shankuka, Bhatta Nayaka, Bhatta Udbhatta, Rudratta, Vamana also wrote on rasa. Kshemendra, the polymath, had his own theory of poetics. Abhinavagupta speaks of nine *rasas,* where *rasa* of peace represents the addition to the eight enumerated by Bharata.

The 9th century scholar Anandavardhana wrote the *Dhvanyaloka.,* the "Light of Suggestion", which is a world-class masterpiece of aesthetic theory. He rejected the earlier theories of alankara and guna by Bhamaha and Dandin according to which ornamental qualities and figures of speech distinguished poetry from ordinary speech. Anandavardhana said that the difference was a quality called *dhvani* which communicates meaning by suggestion indirectly. Anandavardhana was a member of the court of the king Avantivarman.

Anandavardhana was the first to note that *rasa* cannot be communicated directly. If one were to say that "so-and-so and his wife are very much in love," we fail to express the nature of the love. This can be done only by *dhvani,* or suggestion. Abhinavagupta, who lived about a hundred years after Anandavardhana, added important elements to the *dhvani* theory. His famous commentary on the Dhvanyaloka is called the Lochana.

The Western classical tradition of criticism has nothing equivalent to the concepts of *rasa* and *dhvani.* These ideas provide unique insights into Indie literature and they can also be useful in the appreciation of non-Indic literatures.

Abhinavagupta, wrote on philosophy, poetry, tantra, as well as aesthetics. Abhinavagupta also wrote on Tantra, his book Tantraloka (Light of the Tantras) is one of the most important on the subject. In all, he wrote more than sixty works. Kshemendra was a philosopher, poet, and a pupil of Abhinavagupta. Among his books is the Brihatkathamanjari which is a summary of Gunadhya's Brihatkatha in 7,500 stanzas. Somadeva's Kathasaritasagara is another version of Gunadhya's Brihatkatha. Somadeva collection of stories has influenced the birth of fiction elsewhere. These stories were written for the queen Suryamati, the wife of king Ananta (1028-1063). The number of stanzas, not counting the prose passages, exceeds 22,000.

THE ADVENT OF ISLAM

The classic arts and the sciences of Kashmir came to an abrupt end when Islam became the dominant force in Kashmir in the fourteenth century. Sculpture, painting, dance, music could no longer be practiced. After the political situation had become stable, the subsequent centuries saw emphasis on devotion and its expression through the Kashmiri language as in the poetry of Lalleshvari. The creative urges at the folk level found expression in the works of the craftsmen of wood and textiles.

But Kashmiri ideas lived on through the arts that transformed expression in Central and East Asia, and through Tantra and aesthetics that shaped attitudes in the rest of India. Many Kashmiris emigrated to other parts; the musicologist Sharngadeva and the poet Bilhana being just two such people. Although Kashmir had sunk to a state of misery, outsiders continued to pay homage to the memory of Kashmir as the land of learning, and Sharada, the presiding goddess of Kashmir became synonymous with Sarasvati.

EARLY KASHMIRI SOCIETY...

The early Kashmiri society was an open-minded, liberal and humane society, culturally advanced, intellectually alert and aesthetically conscious. Their religion allowed different beliefs and modes of worship to co-exist happily and cordially.

Islam did not spread due to its attractiveness. Its inroads were entirely the result of vandalism that destroyed most of the temples and viharas, massacres of innocent 'infidels', imposition of religious taxes and forcible conversions. Whether it was the Sunnis or the Shias, their strategy was the same.

It is fallacious to argue that the Hindus brought the atrocities upon themselves by their own behaviour. The caste system was not rigidly structured, the Brahmins did not exploit the other castes and there was no such thing as a 'Shariat-oriented culture'.

In fact, Islam is highly exploitative. It institutionalizes slavery. It discriminates against women. It gives no rights to non-Muslims. The much-vaunted brotherhood of Islam is a brotherhood of Muslims alone and even among them it is the Arabs who are the chosen people.

The Hindus lost to Islam because the Turkish art of warfare was superior, there was lack of unity among the Hindu chieftains and they did not maintain standing armies. The highly sophisticated culture of the Hindus was pitted against the brutal, war-mongering barbarism of the Muslims.

There have been seven periods of exodus for the Kashmiri Pandits. Yet, although the Pandits have been defeated, they have not been destroyed. They still hold tenaciously to the values and beliefs evolved by their early ancestors.

CHAPTER 4

EARLY KASHMIRI SOCIETY AND THE CHALLENGE OF ISLAM

S. S. Toshkhani

INTRODUCTION

Exploring what kind a society existed in Kashmir before the advent of Islam is a very interesting but also a challenging task. How was it organized? What were its institutions, its belief systems and traditions, its values and ideals? To know this in full and exact detail, we have but fragmentary and scattered sources of information available to us. Buried beneath a several kilometer long cause way running across the Dal Lake in Srinagar are hundreds and thousands of ancient manuscripts that could have provided us with a wealth of evidence. But they seem to be irretrievably lost. All is not lost though. On the basis of still extant source materials, pioneering work of great value has been done in the recent decades by erudite scholars like Dr. Ved Kumari Ghai, Dr. S.C. Ray and Ajay Mitra Shastri to prepare a coherent and connected account of ancient Kashmir's social and cultural life. Yet the field of investigation is so vast, and the available evidence so limited, that there still remain large areas which are unexplored. Furthermore, the studies of these scholars seem to suffer from a certain lack of perspective and orientation, based as they are on the Western Indologists' line of approach, consisting of too literal an interpretation of myth.

The immediate necessity, therefore, is for someone to carry the work of the pioneering scholars further on, and to offer fresh perspectives and new insights into things. It is a colossal exercise, and I do not know whether I am at all equipped for it. What I know, however, is that it is extremely important to trace the genesis and evolution of Kashmiri society from the earliest times in view of attempts being made by some people to present the entire pre-Islamic past of the valley as one long period of darkness. A lot of mischief has been done by those who in the garb of historiographers are using negativist and reductionist tactics to suppress what is true and suggest what is false. They have mined the whole area of historical investigation with numerous falsehoods and fact distortions. These shall, therefore, have to be cleared from the path of our vision so that it will be possible for us to see and place things in a clear and correct perspective.

A MIXTURE OF ETHNIC GROUPS

At the outset, we must understand that when we talk of early Kashmiri society, we do not mean thereby any particular racial or ethnic group, for there have been several such groups - Aryans, Nagas, Pishachas and others - which have come together in some distant pre-historic past to give shape to this society. In an age of mass migrations of populations all over the world, these people met and mixed integrated, merging their individual identities with one another. Their mixing and commingling is commemorated in the Nilamata Purana, a 6th or 7th century text in Sanskrit which gives Kashmir's own creation myth. According to this Purana, gods intervened to reclaim the Himalayan Valley from the waters of a primordial lake that filled it. Killing the demon who infested the lake, they drained away the water at the request of Rishi Kashyapa, preceptor and progenitor par excellence, who took the initiative in populating the land thus reclaimed. But there was a hiccup. The Nagas, claiming to be the aboriginal inhabitants, resented Kashyapa's recommendation of allowing Manavas (descendents of Manu — read Vedic Aryans) to cohabit with them[1]. They had second thoughts as soon as an enraged Kashyapa gave them the option of having to live with the "terrible" Pischachas. In the end we find all the racial elements that constituted the ancient population of Kashmir living together in a spirit of harmony and cordiality, following the instructions of the Naga king, Nila. These instructions, as we see, concern performance of certain rites and ceremonies, which for the most part are quite similar to those prescribed in other Puranas, except in case of a few rites related to Naga worship. The Nilamata Purana is a record of their coming together, a process which must have taken centuries of assimilation. On its pages we see the earliest contours of a Kashmiri society beginning to emerge.

But that is not the manner some people would like things to have been. In their eagerness to be counted among ethno-historians, they see a bloody ethnic strife to be at the root of it all. Presenting the episode of the Nagas' initial unwillingness to accommodate, let us say, Vedic Aryans, as a gory struggle for domination *a la* colonial historians' theory of Aryan invasion, they read discord into accord and accuse "alien" Aryans to have "annihilated" the original inhabitants of Kashmir. "The blood of Nagas flows on the pages of the Nilamata, shrieks one poet-turned-politician-turned ethnologist. "Massacre most foul", cries another, forgetting that there is nothing in the Nilamata even remotely suggestive of any such conflict or tension, and that it was Vishnu who gave Nagas fleeing from the wrath of Garuda, their arch enemy, shelter on the mountains surrounding the Kashmir Valley. After all, the Nilmata does not read like a document of war but a document of compromise and reconciliation, of the birth of a unique civilization on the banks of river Vitasta against the backdrop of snow clad mountains. Besides, as we have said earlier, in that age of mass migrations of people, no geographical boundaries were fixed, and the state just did not exist. Anyway, let us not give the feverish imagination of these people more attention than it deserves. These are, we must know, tactics to draw attention.

We have, however, to study closely the implications of the archaeological explorations which suggest that the earliest inhabitants of Kashmir were the Neolithic pit-dwellers of Burzahom, a village near Srinagar. Some Neolithic sites have been discovered in several places in the southern parts of the Valley also. Neolithic culture is said to have flourished there between 2300 BC and 2nd century AD. But as data available from Burzahom has not yet been systematically studied and analyzed, the identity of its Neolithic settlers has not been identified. Nor do we know whether they have any relations with the people of the Nilamata age or the present inhabitants of Kashmir. We are also not sure whether they had any social organization worth the name. To get a clear picture of how early Kashmiris lived, thought and worked, we have to fall back upon the Nilamata Purana and other literary sources, including Kalnana's Rajatarangini, Damodargupta's Kuttanimata Kavya, Kshemendra's writings, Bilhana's Vikramankadeva Charit, Somadeva's Kathasantsagara, Buddhist Avadana literature, Laugakshi's Grihyasutra, Shaiva and Shakta Tantnc literature, and stray references in other early works. Chinese and Tibetan records including Taranatha's history of Buddhism in India and translations of old Buddhist texts are also of great value. Information gleaned from these different sources can then be checked for authenticity by relating it to archaeological evidence wherever available.

THE CASTE SYSTEM

Let us again revert to the Nilamata Purana and its reference to immigrant Brahmanas from Aryadesha who followed Chandradeva and settled in Kashmir. It is highly possible that a bulk of them were from the Saraswati Valley who must have decided to migrate to Kashmir after the legendary river changed its course and finally dried up. There is a persistent and strong tradition among Kashmiri Pandits that they are Saraswat Brahmins, and the presence of a large number of words of Vedic origin in the Kashmiri language seems to confirm it. From accounts given in the Nilamata, Rajatarangini and other early sources, they appear to have emerged as the dominant and highly respected social group in Kashmir, not just because they were associated with religious rites and ceremonies, but because of their intellectual proclivities, their natural gravitation towards cultivation of cerebral graces. They were intellectual people who prized learning above everything else. And indeed it is because of their contributions that Kashmir came to be known all over the world as a great seat of Sanskrit learning. In the ancient texts referred to above, we see them as people "engaged in self-study, contemplation, performance of sacrifice, penance and the study of the Vedas and Vedangas"[2]. Respect was shown to them because they were supposed to be *"itihasvidah"* and *"kaavidah"*, that is "knowers of history and the commoisseurs of art"[3]. And who can provide a better proof of this than Kalhana, the great author of Rajatarangini, and the whole host of chroniclers of Kashmir who followed him - Jonaraja and Shrivara, Pragyabhatta and Shuka? Brahmins were also required to have a through grounding in the six schools of philosophy, astrology and astronomy, grammar, logic, prosody and medicine, besides religious texts. They had to live an austere life and adhere to a high moral code. Nowhere has it been suggested that they should be worshipped "as gods on the earth" even if they are illiterate and ignorant. And yet all Brahmins have been equated with priests and shown as representatives of an exploitative and oppressive social order by historians whose only pastime is Brahmin - bashing. They are accused of appropriating the surplus in agriculture and growing rich on the gifts given to them by others.

There is no doubt that Brahmins did hold a high position in the society, but mainly as an intellectual and scholarly class, and not all of them adopted priesthood as their profession. And those who did were not much respected as they were recipients of donations and sacrificial fees and not donors. The donor was the patron, *the yajamana* who hired a priest to have a religious sacrifice or ritual performed. And anybody could be the patron under the *yajmani* system - including a Brahmana.

But this we shall take up later. Suffice it to say here that the Brahmins took up several occupations during the period under review, besides serving as priests. They were *katha-vachakas* or narrators of Puranic stories, astrologers, *vaidyas* or physicians, teachers, and even agriculturists. Some of them joined the administrative service also and became councilors and ministers. Some, like Kalhana's own father Champaka, adopted the military career.

What about the other castes? If Dr. S.C. Ray is to be believed, there were no intermediate castes in Kashmir, not even Shudras. "Though the conception of the population as consisting of the four traditional castes was not altogether unknown", he writes, "there was no such caste as Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra in early Kashmir". While he describes Brahmanas as "definitely the more privileged and honoured caste"[4], he mentions Nishadas, Kiratas, Dombas, Shvapakas and Chandalas as the lower castes. Dr. Ray's view appears to be only partially true. The Nishadas, the Kiratas, the Dombas etc. were no doubt there, but the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas were not altogether absent, though they have not been mentioned in that detail. The Nilamata describes the functions of all the four traditional castes and says that representatives of all the four participated in the king's coronation. The Rajatarangini too makes specific references to Kshatriyas as well as Vaishyas in the context of Kashmir's ancient history. There is no reference in it of any tension between the castes, nor anything like the priest - king collusion to maintain hegemony over others. The Brahmanas, however, are often shown as resorting to *prayopavesha* or hunger-strike to get their demands accepted by the king. The confrontation between King Jayapida and the Brahmanas of Tulamula is a well known example[5].

There may not be many direct references to Vaishyas as such in Rajatarangani and other early works, but Kalhana does mention the emergence of a rich and prosperous merchant class. With the opening of overland trade routes during Kanishka's rule, and perhaps, earlier, trade and commerce with foreign countries appears to have received a boost. Commercial activity must have been particularly brisk during the rule of the Karkotas. Extensive conquests by kings like Lalitaditya must have opened vast markets for Kashmiri goods in neighbouring territories. The Valley was full of wealthy merchants, says Kalahana, with some of them living in palatial buildings excelling the king's palace[6]. Damodargupta's reference to *shreshthin* and *vanikas*[7] also indicates the existence of a rich and prosperous trading community during his time, belonging probably to the Vaishya caste. Many among the upward mobile artisan classes in the Valley too must have belonged to this community.

As for the Shudras, Nilamata counts the *karmajivin* (workers) and *shilpis* (artisans) as Shudras[8] - that is, the "weavers, carpenters, goldsmiths, silversmiths, blacksmiths, leather-tanners and potters. They were treated with some respect in the society and were among those who exchanged gifts with the "higher *varnas*" during the Mahimana celebrations, says Dr. Ved Kumari[9]. The servants serving in the houses of the higher castes too belonged to the caste. They were treated with sympathy and were included in the list of the persons "in whose company the householder feasted and enjoyed[10]". The very fact, writes Dr. Ved Kumari, that the Nilmata describes the Shudras as taking part in the coronation ceremony of the king, shows that they were not debased[11].

There were people belonging to mixed castes also like Suta, Magadha and Vandi who lived by singing the paeans of heroes and other famous persons.

Dr. S.C.Ray counts the Nishadas, Kiratas, Dombas etc among the low caste people but stops short of calling them Shudras. The Nishadas, who lived by hunting and fishing, are also described as boatsmen in the Rajatarangmi. The Kiratas, who were hunters and animal trappers, were a forest,dwelling tribe belonging to the Tibeto-Burman racial stock. The Dombas have been described in the Rajatarangini in association with the Chandalas as huntsmen belonging to the menial class[12]. Kalhana calls them "Shvapakas" or "dog-eating people". But they have also been shown as good musicians who made quite a profession of their singing and dancing. Kalhana mentions the story of a Domba singer Ranga whose daughters gave a performance in the glittering royal assembly hall of Chakravarman and were included in the king's seraglio, one of them becoming the chief queen much to the chagrin of others[13]. Consequently, Dombas became the favourites of the king and wielded much influence at his court as councillors. Chandalas, were braves and fierce fighters, who worked as executioners and were also employed as the king's watchmen.

The division of early Kashmiri society into four castes and their sub-castes was only notional. In actual fact, the caste-system was never rigid in Kashmir, or of a tyrannical character. Intermarriages between various castes were not uncommon, as we learn from works like the Katha-sarit-sagara. It is not, therefore relevant to talk of social-organization in terms of caste so far as at least Kashmir is concerned. The society in Kashmir was actually divided along occupational or socio-economic lines. Writes Dr. S.C.Ray : "Three distinct classes of people evolved, along with their several sub-divisions, on the basis of three principle methods of production (agriculture, industry and trade)"[14]. While agriculturists constituted the bulk of these occupational classes, artisans and merchants too had important roles to play in the society.

Though agriculture formed the mainstay of the economy, it is not known whether the cultivators in ancient Kashmir were the owners of the lands they tilled or mere tenants of the actual landlords. In all probability, they had a certain share in the crop harvested by them, but its distribution lay mainly in the lands of the king and the feudal lords. The fact that cultivators participated in the joyful festivals related to agriculture during the Nilamata age shows that they were by and large owners of the lands tilled by them.

THE DAMARAS

But around the 8th century, a new class of feudal landlords known as the Damaras appeared on the scene and started gaming control of the agricultural economy. We do not hear of them in the Nilamata, nor in the first three books of the Rajatarangini till we find Lalitaditya, Kashmir's most powerful king, warning his successors not to leave cultivators of the land with more than what they require "for their bare sustenance and the tillage of the land". Otherwise, he says "they would become in a single year very formidable Damaras and strong enough to neglect the commands of the kings"[15]. And then we learn that they were agriculturists who owned large chunks of land. Lalitaditya's warning appears to have had no effect, for we see the Damaras becoming more and more wealthy and gaining more and more strength. By the time the Lohara dynasty ascended the throne, they had become so rich and powerful that they began to interfere in the affairs of the State. Living in fortified residences, they raised large private armies and established their strongholds all over Kashmir. Such was their power and influence that they were able to extend their stranglehold over the administration, becoming virtual king-makers, enthroning or dethroning anyone according to their wish. In the wars of succession that became endemic after the 10th century, we find them supporting one claimant to the throne or the other, their support often proving to be the deciding factor. This is what happened in the internecine conflicts between Ananta and Kalasha and Kalasha and Harsha, each of them vying for their help. Powerful rulers like Didda, Ananta, Kalasha and Jayasimha used every stratagem to curb them, including the use of military force, but the Damaras continued to retain their nuisance value. Dr. S.C.Ray attributes the rise and growth of the Damaras not only to the "weakness of the royal authority" and "the constant wars of succession", but also to "the economic structure of the society"[16], which because of increasing dependence on agricultural lands for revenue proved helpful to the rise of the landed aristocracy. As their wealth and influence increased, the Damaras came to be looked upon with respect in the society, with royal families establishing even matrimonial relations with them.

THE MERCHANTS

Merchants formed another important and influential section of the society. We have already referred to their rise while talking of the Vaishyas. Kalhana shows them living in great affluence in palatial residences more magnificent than even the king's palace. Kashmir's trade and commercial ties with the neighbouring regions appear to have been very strong right for the Kushana period or even earlier and by the time the Karkotas rose to power, an extensive export market became available for Kashmiri goods, which presumably included raw wool and woolen fabrics, hides and skins and leather articles, fruits, and most important of all, saffron. Among the articles of imports salt seemed to be the most important. Silk, which seems to have been imported from the neighbouring China, vermilion, asfoetida and several other spices, and coral, imported possibly from the western regions, were possibly the other important items. With this the wealthy merchant class gained ascendancy in the society. We can see in Damodaragupta's Kuttanimata Kavya, *shreshin* and *vanikas* living in great luxury and patronising theatre-houses. However their importance began to decline when the overland trade routes were closed and trade became more of an internalized affair. They even began to resort to deceitful means for making quick money, as Kalhana and Kshemendra seem to suggest.

While agricultural and trading communities were very important elements in the society from the socio-economic point of view, the artisan classes also witnessed a significant growth in early Kashmir. These included the weavers and the jewellers, metal casters and image-makers, potters and carpenters, blacksmiths and leather tanners etc. Although their sphere of activity was quite wide, there were were no corporate or traders' guilds in Kashmir as in other parts of India.

There were also occupational communities who served the society in various other ways. Among these could be counted the wrestlers, the actors, the dancers, the physicians, the shepherds, the gardeners and also the courtesans who plied the world's oldest trade. These people were not directly connected with the production of wealth, but nonetheless had their own place in the society.

THE BUREAUCRACY

Yet another class, which distinguished itself from all the classes mentioned above was that of the administrators. It consisted of the nobility and the bureaucracy. As Dr. S.C. Ray has pointed out, the highest civil and military officials were drawn from the nobility, and these included the *sarvadhikara* (also called *dhi-sachiva)* or prime minister, *sachiva* or minister, the *mandalesha* or governor and the *kampanesha* or commander-in-chief'. Being important officers of the State the nobility drew large salaries from the royal treasury.

The bureaucracy assisted them in running the general administration of the State. It consisted of all kinds of officials, both high and low, all of them being known by the general cover term "Kayastha", which did not denote any particular caste. Members of any caste or class could be recruited as Kayasthas, including the Brahmanas. Both Kalhana and Kshemendra have flayed them for their greed and for their cruel methods of exacting revenue and taxes from the people. Kshemendra gives a long list of their designations in his works Narmamala and Samaya Matrika[18]. Describing them as an exploitative and oppressive class, he exposes their fraudulent ways and bungling, and accuses them of forgery, misappropriation and embezzlement. Kalhana too speaks about them in the same vein. The common man appears to have been squeezed between the tyrannical Damaras and the oppressive and greedy Kayasthas, though not all Kayasthas could have been like that.

POSITION OF WOMEN

One of the most significant, and surprising, features of the early Kashmiri society was the freedom that women enjoyed. The picture one gets of their life from various literary sources is not that of servitude or deprivation but of happy participation in different spheres of human activity. There was no attempt to marginalise them or deculturise their personality, as was being done in other contemporary societies elsewhere in the world. Though under the protective umbrella of the family, they occupied a pivotal place in social life and moved about with unfettered freedom. Undoubtedly, the society was patriarchal, but there was no restriction on the movement of women, nor were any irrational curbs imposed on their activity. In the age of Nilamata and the centuries that followed, female seclusion was something unknown in Kashmir till Islam made its advent. Participating joyfully in the numerous festivals prescribed in the Nilamata, they would go to the gardens in the company of their menfolk without any inhibition or fear. For instance, during the Iramanjari - utsava, they would freely sport with men under the flower-laden boughs of the Iramanjari shrubs, exchanging garlands of flowers with men in a spirit of gay abandon[19]. Or go to the fruit gardens on the Ashokikashtami day to worship fruit-bearing trees[20]. Such was the spirit of the times that during the Shravani Utsava, young maidens were enjoined to go and enjoy water sports[21]. Yet another seasonal festival was Krishyarambha when peasant women would accompany their menfolk to the "open fields of nature" for ceremonial ploughing of the soil and sowing of seeds[22]. It was a month long festival celebrated amidst much singing and dancing. While these outdoor festivals showed that women in these times were in no way confined to the four walls of their homes, there were numerous indoor festivals too. For instance, during the Kaumudi Mahotsava or the Festival of the Full Moon, women would sit beside the sacred fire with their husbands and children, watching the beauty of the moonlit night[23]. Even servants were allowed to participate in such festivals. Then there was Madana Trayodashi, a festival dedicated to the god of love. On this occasion a husband would demonstrate his love for his wife by personally giving her a bath with sacred water scented by herbs[24]. Similarly, at the end of the three-day Mahimana celebrations, well-adorned ladies would freely and joyfully play with men[25]. On Sukha Suptika or Deepawali night, the well-adorned wife could display her charms to her husband in the exciting privacy of the specially decorated bedroom and savour his compliments[26]

That is not all. There were special occasions when men were to make ladies of the house happy by giving them new clothes as presents. One such occasion was on the Navahimapata-utsava or the New Snowfall Day[27] - a festival that was celebrated by the Kasmiri Pandits till they were exiled from their native land. On the full moon day of Margashirsha (January-February), the householder is enjoined by the Nilamata to invite his sister, paternal aunt and friend's wife, besides a Brahmana lady, and honour them with gifts of new clothes[28]. Presentation of gifts to a friend's wife ! That could happen only in a free society.

An enlivening feature of these beautiful festivals was music. Music and dance and dramatic shows - these were an essential part of the festivals that the early Hindus of Kashmir celebrated. And the ladies watched these shows with great joy. Not only watched them but must have participated in them. And the ladies were attractively attired, well decorated and well perfumed during these festivities[29] Surely, this must have added great charm and beauty to their life. Another thing even more important to be noted is that these ancient social festivals have a religious setting.

Coming to religious life, the presence of women in the performance of various rites, rituals and ceremonies was regarded as essential. And that is how things should have been in a society where people regarded Kashmir, their native land, embodiment of goddess Uma. This is very significant, for it shows that the Mother Goddess cult has occupied a central place in the religious beliefs of Kashmiri Hindus from the earliest times, a cult that explains respect for women as an aspect of reverence for the divine feminine. A host of goddesses began to be worshipped in Kashmir from Uma and Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati and Mahakali to the very popular and very local deities like Sharika, Ragya, Tnpura and Jwala. Shaiva and Shakta Tantncism, which became very popular in Kashmir from the 7th century, identifies Shakti with Supreme Reality, which, it says is "female in essence". That makes us understand why an aspirant taking to the Kulachara mode of worship is asked to look upon women with extreme reverence.

One of the most noteworthy features of early Kashmir society was that women had access to good and liberal education. They were taught among other things literature and fine arts and given practical training in music, dance and drama, which were considered as accomplishments fit for them. There is ample evidence for this in Kalhana's Rajatarangini, Somadeva's Katha-sarit-sagara, Damodargupta's Kuttanimata Kavya, Bilhana's Vikramankadeva Charit and several other works. The great Sanskrit grammarian Panini give the formation *kahi* for a female student of Kathaka school of Black Yajurveda[30] to which the Kashmiri Pandits belong. An idea of the curriculum can be had from the Kuttanimata Kavya.

A girl was taught a variety of subjects, we learn, including literature, Bharata's Natyashastra, paintings, abori-culture, cookery, cut-work in leaves *(patra-chcheda),* vocal and instrumental music etc[31]. In a nostalgic mood Bilhana remembers towards the end of Vikramankadeva Charit the accomplished women of Kashmir who not only spoke Sanskrit and Prakrit as fluently as their mother tongue, but also composed poetry in it[32]. In theatrical performance and dancing they excelled the celestial maidens.

Several women have played a significant role in shaping the political history of Kashmir. Yashovati became the first queen in Kashmir to be enthroned as a ruler -even though as a regent. Queens like Sugandha and Didda gave very impressive account of their administrative acumen. Many others, like Khadana, Amntprabha, Chakramardika, Kalyandevi, Ratnadevi and Kamla Devi built shrines and marketplaces and towns. Chandrapida's queen Kalyanadevi was exalted by the King as "Mahapratiharapala, something like the Chief Chamberlain. Suryamati, the queen of King Ananta helped her husband to overcome his initial difficulties in administering the State. Queen Kalhanika, was sent on a delicate diplomatic mission of bringing about a rapprochement between Jayasimha and Bhoja. This presupposes that these queens must have received some training in the art of administration and diplomacy preciously.

As for the common woman, we do not know what occupations, if any, were open to her besides that of a housewife. We have a water carrier sculpted on a tile from Harwvan. Perhaps some women worked as flower sellers too. Most of them, however, took care of their family and children, acting as wife and mother. There is evidence to show that pre-puberty marriages of girls did not take place. In fact, works like Kshemendra's Deshopadesha indicate that girls were married at a mature age. Though fidelity in marriage was regarded as an ideal, polygamy seems to have been quite prevalent among the rich and the well to do men. The kings had "seraglios full of queens and concubines". Widows were supposed to live an austere and highly moral life. Prevalence of *sati* among the rich and aristocratic families points to some of the blemishes which ancient Kashmiri society suffered from.

Though we do not come across any example of polyandry, prostitution seems to have been quite common. "Although prostitution was tolerated as an inescapable evil," writes Ajay Mitra Shastri, " the society looked down upon prostitutes and condemned men indulgent to them in unmistakable terms"[33]. Authors like Damodaragupta and Kshemendra were closely acquainted with the trade. Damodargupta's Kuttanimata gives us an insight into the prostitutes' mode of behaviour, their proficiency in literature and fine arts, their greed for money and customs connected with their craft. Kshemendra too in his Narmamala, Samaya Matrika and Deshopadesha draws detailed and graphic pictures of prostitutes' life and exposes the moral laxity that had crept in his contemporary society. Kalhana and Somadeva also make references to the system of *'devadasi'* (dedicating girls to a temple for dancing and singing) that seems to have prevailed in Kashmir from quite early times, and could be described as a form of prostitution.

On the whole, however, it is a happy picture of Kashmiri women that emerges from literary sources. Dr. S.C. Ray has drawn our attention to a very significant fact in this context. To put it in this own words : "Women in Kashmir probably had some property rights and independent legal status. Kalhana in his Rajatarangini and Kshemendra in his Samaya Matrika seem to indicate that a widow inherited her husbands' immovable property after his death, rather than his sons"[34]. This is something really very significant, and needs further research.

This discussion about social organization in ancient and early Kashmir is by no means complete and conclusive, but we can safely draw certain inferences. The first and the most important fact that that must be noted is that though there was an awareness of the four traditional castes, Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, the early Kashmiri society was not rigid about the caste system. In fact, it was divided more along occupational lines than caste lines. The Brahmanas were no doubt highly respected, but because they valued learning above everything else and formed the intellectual class. The religious rituals and ceremonies were performed by the priestly class among the Brahmanas, and not all Brahmanas were priests. Secondly, the most important occupational class in the society was that of the agriculturists, followed by the rich and prosperous merchants and traders and the various upward mobile artisan classes. It were the Damaras among the agriculturists who became very powerful and influential as feudal landlords and interfered with the affairs of the State, holding at times the entire administration to ransom. There was also the administrative class, which was comprised of the nobility and the bureaucracy. The latter was referred to by the cover name of Kayastha or the king's officers engaged in collecting revenue and taxes, but they did not belong to any specific caste. Their oppressive and exploitative methods and their greed and corruption have been severely criticized by writers like Kshemendra and Kalhana. Thirdly, and lastly, women occupied a high position in the society and enjoyed freedom unknown in contemporary societies elsewhere in the world. Tantracism of the Shaiva and Shakta variety which led to the spread of the mother goddess cult in Kashmir regards Supreme Reality to be feminine in essence and calls for revering women as manifestations of the eternal feminine or Shakti.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

With this we come to another important aspect of our study of the early Kashmiri society - social life. Here too we do not have enough source materials to base our investigation on. Even so the few literary sources that are available to us can provide us with considerable, though still not adequate, guidance. Beginning with the Nilamata again, we find that the sylvan valley of Kashmir was full of "ever sportive and joyful people enjoying continuous festivities". Living in perfect harmony with their beautiful surroundings, "they played, danced and sang to express their joys, to please their gods and to appease their demons", as Dr. Ved Kumari puts it[35]. Music and dance, it appears, were an integral part of their life, the key to their cultural DNA. The Rajatarangini and Kutttanimata Kavya further testify to what the Nilamata indicates - the enormous popularity of vocal and instrumental music, dance, and theatre performances among the early Kashmiri people. Music was popular even among the Buddhist monks, Kalhana tells us. There were festivals galore that they celebrated - festivals that evoked devotion for the divine, festivals that celebrated the blooming of flowers in spring, festivals that expressed joy at the ploughing of the land and sowing of seeds, festivals related to the ripening of barely in the fields and harvesting the first crop of the paddy in autumn festivals, and even festivals evoking the Bacchanalian spirit on the ripening of grapes. But there was not one festival which did not have music and dancing as its essential feature. Any pretext was enough for people to celebrate with snatches of a song and jigs of a dance - be it the birthday of a god or the new snowfall day! What is interesting is that while their context was social, their setting was religious.

And what was the nature of this music and dancing? Mostly folk, of course, but also classical, in accordance with the precepts of Bharata's Natyashastra, as we learn from Nitamata[36] and Kuttanimata[37]. Musical instruments of all the four types - *ata* (stringed), *avanaddha* (percussion), *ghana* (cymbals), and *sushira* (wind) were in vogue. *Veena* or *tantri, pataha* (drum), *muruj* (tabor) *mridanga* (double drum), *venu* (lute), *shankha* (conch), *ghanta* (bell) and *turya* (trumpet) were among the more commonly used varieties. Harmony between vocal and instrumental music was highly appreciated. In an 11th century pen-portrait of Abhinavagupta, Madhuraja shows him with his fingers strumming the *veena*[38]. Bilhana extolls the skill of Kashmiri women in dancing and theatrical performances[39]. It is no wonder then that Kashmir produced one of the greatest Indian masters of music, Sharangadeva, the writer of Sangeet Ratnakara, which is perhaps the best treatise ever written on Indian music.

What literary sources say about the popularity of music and dancing in early Kashmiri society is supported by archaeological evidence. Thus, in one of the tiles from Harwan, we see three musicians, one playing a flute, another cymbals and the third a pair of drums. Another tile shows a female musician playing on a drum which is hung over her shoulder. Yet another tile depicts a female dancer in an actual dancing posture. She is shown holding a long scarf in her hands and waving it. Kings of Kashmir patronized music, dancing and theatre. King Kalasha had a craze for dancing girls[40] and so did Harsha who kept awake through the nights to personally instruct dancing girls in the art of acting in his own royal palace[41].

A unique thing about theatrical performances in Kashmir during the Nilamata age was the idea of *"prekshadana"* or "giving a dramatic show as a gift"[42]. Professional theatre groups *(rangajivin)* would give such "gifts" to entertain people on certain occasions and they in turn were supposed to sustain these groups. In Damodaragupta's time (9th century), big business magnates, the *shreshthis* and the *vanikas* patronised the dramatic art. According to him there were large theatre halls in his native land fitted with cushioned seats and back-rests[43]. In an interesting reference, Kalhana compares fleeing armies to theatre-goers caught in a downpour[44], which suggests, however, that common people must have watched such performances in open-air theatres. Kshemendra too refers to the existence of theatre halls in Kashmir.

Puppet-plays also appear to have been popular in early Kashmir. Kuttammata Kavya refers to wooden dolls which were manipulated by means of a mechanical thread *(yantrasutra)* and made to dance[45].

There were many other games and amusements with which people in early Kashmir entertained themselves. Among these, garden sports seem to have been extremely popular, and naturally so because nature has gifted Kashmir with plenty of gardens and beautiful parks. On festivals like Iramanjari Pujana or Ashokikashtami they would throng to these gardens and enjoy themselves with a variety of sports. Such sports have been described at length in the Kamasutra and several other works. "Special meals taken in gardens in the company of friends and members of the family", writes Dr. Ved Kumari, "were a part of such garden sports"[46]. Young maidens could have their fun and enjoy water sports on the Shravani festival, according to Nilamata. Kuttanimata also refers to these sports as a favourite form of amusement for young men and women who would sprinkle water on one another with a *karayanlra* or syringe[47].

Kanduka-krida or ball-playing, which is said to have been "one of the most favourite games of ancient India" was equally popular in Kashmir, particularly among girls. Damodaragupta's Kuttanimata[48] as well as Shyamilaka's Pada-taditaka[49] vouch for its popularity.

Chess and dice playing were among the favourite indoor-games of the people of Kashmir from very early times. Nilamata prescribes playing dice on the Sukha Suptihka or Deepavali night[50], Rajatarangini offers ample evidence of their prevalence[51]. Kuttammata refers to it as a popular pastime. Women, it informs us, too played chess[52].

Hunting was one of the favourite pastimes of men, and was particularly popular among princes. Some tiles from Harwan depict huntsmen on horseback chasing deer. Common people enjoyed watching wrestling bouts and animal fights. We find interesting depiction of ram fights and cock fights on some Harwan tiles.

Goshthis or social gatherings provided good entertainment to sophisticated and culturally refined people in ancient India. There is evidence in Kuttanimata Kavya that such gatherings were common in early Kashmir also[53] Kshemendra refers to *asthanis* or sitting rooms where friends would gather for conversation after having meals[54]. Respect was shown to gifted people known for their learning or their skill in the arts, at such gatherings.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

It is indeed intriguing that we do not come across any evidence, literary or archaeological, of ancient inhabitants of Kashmir dressing or adorning themselves like its present day inhabitants. The typically 'Kashmiri' articles of male and female costume, like the *pheran*, the turban, the *proofs*, and *taranga* are totally absent from literary works or sculptural representations. Is it because these were imposed on the Kashmiri Hindus at some later time? How close is their resemblance to the *pairahan* of the Middle East and the traditional headgear of Egypt and Sudan? What we find instead is the early Kashmiris using a variety of costumes and adornments suited to the requirements of "time and clime", as dictated by good taste. Hsuan Tsang, the Chinese traveller who visited Kashmir in 631 AD tells us in his account that people there wore leather doublets and clothes of fine linen[55]. Other sources inform that both male and female attire consisted of *vasana yugala* or an upper and lower garment. And these garments were made from a variety of fabrics - cotton, wool, china silk, *patika* (a course variety of silk) and hemp. As the climate was cold, they covered their bodies with woolen garments in winter. Kalhana uses the word *"pravara"* for the woolen cloaks he says they wore[56]. Nilamata calls them *'pravarana'*. The poor used *kambala* or *sthulambala* (coarse blankets)[57]. "Garments interwoven with threads of gold, dazzling the eyes" were also worn, according to Kuttanimata[58]. But the most detailed information about dress and ornaments (worn in 11th century Kashmir) is provided by Kshemendra's works Narmamala, Samaya Matrika and Deshopadesha[59]. Men wore a long-sleeved tunic called *kanchuka* as the upper garment. Women's upper garment too was called *kanchuka,* but in their case it was both a long-sleeved and a half-sleeved one — a kind of jacket not much different from the modern *choli.* As their lower garment men wore a kind of trousers called *pinga* or *janghala,* according to Kshemendra. He has used the terms *karpari* and *samputi* also for trousers, but perhaps these trousers were of a different kind or made from different fabrics. *Dhoti* or *pati* was also worn by men, but *pati* sometimes meant a kind of scarf. They wore *angarakshaka* also over the *kanchuka* and wrapped their bodies in *tusti* (perhaps a precursor of the present day shawl). Kshemendra also refers to *kambala* or woolen blanket they used to cover the body. The male headgear generally consisted of *shirahshata,* a kind of turban. Caps of different sizes and shapes called the *tupika* (Hindi *topi*) were also in vogue. Kshemendra refers to *mochot,* a type of socks, or perhaps boots, reaching partway up to the knees, as being commonly in use.

According to Damodaragupta, men, rich and poor alike, used leather shoes — a necessity in a cold place like Kashmir. The rich, he says, wore fashionable shoes having floral decorations from outside and fitted with steel soles imported probably from Central Asia. Bee-wax was placed inside these shoes to make them comfortable to wear[60]. The more fashionable men, according to Kshemendra, wore *mayuropanah* or peacock shoes[61].

We do not get much information about female dress from Kshemendra, except that they wore *kanchuka* as the upper garment. According to Damodargupta, they also were *varabana,* which he describes as an item of dress similar to a *kanchuka*[62]. Men also wore *varabana,* but in their case it was a kind of short fur coat. Kalhana tells us that ladies generally attired themselves in a Sari and jacket *(kanchuka)*[63]. For the upper garment they used *uttariya* or *amshuka.* They also wrapped themselves in woolen shawls. "Fashionable ladies", says Ajay Mitra Shastri quoting Kuttammata, "loved to wear soft, clean and perfumed clothes". They were fond of Chinese silk, he writes[64]. In Harsha's time, they wore half-sleeved jackets and lower garments "which were so long that their tail ends touched the ground"[65].

People, both men and women, were fond of wearing coloured clothes, except widows who were always dressed in white. Garments coloured with saffron dye were more preferred by fashion conscious men and women.

Women as well as men in early Kashmir were very fond of wearing ornaments and adorning themselves. Women were naturally more crazy than men for embellishing themselves with a variety of jewelleries. Kalhana mentions necklaces, ear-rings, armlets, wristlets, anklets etc among the ornaments that ladies would wear[66]. Damodaragupta takes great delight in describing various kinds of necklaces hugging the bosoms of pretty women of his times. He speaks of pearl necklaces *(mukta hara)* having several strands of pearls[67] Kshemendra speaks of coral collars *(kanthi)* and conch-shell necklaces *(shankhalatika)*[68]. They were fond of wearing ear-rings of various shapes. Both Damodargupta and Kshemendra speak of palm-shaped ear-drop known as *kanaka-tadi* that came to Kashmir from the South. King Harsha introduced new types of jewelleries in the 10th century which too seem to have come from the South[69]. These included *ketaka*-leafed tiaras, pendants which rested on the forehead. *(tilaka,* modern *tikka)* and golden-strings at the end of the locks, perhaps something like the ornament called *talaraz* in Kashmiri. Ladies also loved to wear a number of bracelets known as *valaya* or *kataka,* on each of the wrists which would make sound on moving. They wore small finger-rings of gold known as *balika* in root of the finger. But jingling girdles adoring the hips and tinkling anklets on the feet were a great craze. Strangely enough there is no reference to *dejihor,* the ear-ornament which identifies married Kashmiri ladies. Perhaps it came later.

Men also liked to wear ornaments of different designs. These included necklaces, earrings, wristlets, armlets, bracelets and finger-rings. Men of ordinary means wore ornaments of cheap materials like glass-beads and conch-shells.

What is very interesting is that both men and women used unguents and cosmetics as beauty-aids. They applied various kinds of perfumed pastes known as *angaraga* and *vilepana* on the face and the body to enhance their physical beauty. These were prepared from ingredients like saffron, sandalwood, camphor and andropogon[70]. Men applied mustard on forehead and saffron pomade on beard. They painted their nails too, and perfumed their clothes with various kinds of powders. Ladies of course were even more conscious about enhancing their bodily charms by using difference cosmetics. They anointed their body with sandalwood and saffron pastes. Using leaves soaked in musk to scent their cheeks, they applied collyrium in the eyes and reddened their feet and lips and, of course, nails, with lac dye *(alaktaka)*[71]. Women were also extremely fond of painting different designs and beauty marks on their faces[72].

Ladies' coiffures were amazingly beautiful and elaborate. Three kinds of hairstyles were particularly popular among them, we learn from Damodaragupta. These were *veni, dhamilla* and *alka-avali. Veni* was a long dangling braid decked with flowers. *Dhamilla,* explains Ajay Mitra Shashtri, was a form of coiffure in which the hair tied into a single big knot over the head and adorned with flowers[73]. Bilhana's reference to it in 'Chaurapanchashika' shows that it was quite popular in Kashmir. *Alaka-avali* according to Shashri, "consisted of arrangement of hair in rows of spiral locks on the forehead."[74]

Various modes of dressing the hair were prevalent among men also. Fashion-conscious men wore their hair long with coloured tassels attached to them. According to Damodargupta, kings and nobles braided their hair in several ways.[75] Damodargupta writes that affluent men arranged their hair with a long piece of cloth covering three fourths of the head and leaving one fourth open. Men also decorated their hair with floral garlands[76].

Much of what has been said in literary works about the costumes and ornaments in vogue in early Kashmir is corroborated by sculptures and terracotta figures of an earlier time. For instance, in one Harwan tile we see a lady carrying a flower vase. She is wearing a diaphanous robe and large ear-rings. On another tile a woman water carrier is shown wearing a Sari. On some tiles appear women wearing close fitting caps. Yet some other tiles depict men wearing trousers and loose fitting robes. Dr. S.C. Ray finds the influence of Central Asian dress of these representations, but this needs to be further investigated. Several splendid terracotta figurines from Ushkur show women in beautiful coiffures with their hair fixed with hairpins. Several busts show them wearing *kanchukas* and necklaces. Terracotta fragments showing girdles and finger rings have also been found from Ushkur.

FOOD AND DRINK

Coming to food and drinks, it hardly needs to be stated that rice was the staple food of people in early Kashmir as it is now. Several preparations were made from rice which included boiled rice, rice sweetened with sugar, rice mixed with pulses *(khichari),* rice mixed with sugar and milk, rice cakes and dried rice.

Barley, and not wheat, was the other important item of food. *Apupa* and *pishtaka* (bread and cake) of barely were very much relished. A special festival was observed to celebrate the ripening of barley in the fields.

Pulses like *mudga (moong), masura, kulatha* and *channa* were widely consumed by the early people of Kashmir, we learn from literary sources. And of course, *parpataka* or *papad* made of pulses was taken as an appetiser.

But perhaps the most popular items of the Kashmiri cuisine were meat and rice. This was found by Macro Polo in the 13th century also[77]. Dishes were prepared from the meat of ram *(mesha),* fowl *(kukkata)* and other birds, literary sources tell us. Flesh of domesticated pigs also came to be consumed towards the end of the 11th century, according to Kalhana[78]. Meat-soup was considered to be a tonic. Fish also was a popular item of the cuisine. Fish broth *(matya supa)* taken with onions and garlic was considered as strength-giving, as both Kshemendra and Kalhana mention[79].

Among vegetables, Kshemendra makes mention of lotus stalk[80] or *nadru* as it is called in Kashmiri. It continues to be a favourite dish of the Kashmiris even today. Common people consumed *upalshaka* (Kashmiri *'vopalhakh')* and *"shand"* (Kashmiri *'hand'*). Fruit was grown abundantly in ancient Kashmir, as testified by Hsuan Tsang. He mentions pear, plum, apricot, peach and grapes as the principal fruits of the Valley[81]. Kashmir perhaps grew an excellent variety of grapes, a fruit which was widely cultivated. Every Sanskrit writer of Kashmir, Kalhana and Abhinavagupta included, speak of it effusively. Kshemendra mentions walnuts also[82], which appear to have been grown in Kashmir from early times. In a place abounding with fruit, fish and fowl, people are bound to develop a taste for rich food.

Honey was popularly consumed and used as a sweetener along with sugarcane. Among condiments, saffron of course was the king. Black pepper *(maricha),* ginger *(marichadraka)* and aesfotida were among the spices used make food tastier.

Drinking of wine appears to have been prevalent in early Kashmir, despite restrictions of the religious texts. Nilamata Purana, in fact, allows it on certain festivals as, for instance, the new snowfall day, Mahimana and Iramanjari-pujana[83]. It was prepared from grapes as well as sugarcane, which were distilled, cooled and scented with flowers to make a delightful drink. Among non-alcoholic drinks, Kalhana mentions *tuhina sharkaram,* a cold drink enjoyed during the summer[84].

People of Kashmir seem to have been very fond of betel leaves, which were imported. There are numerous references to the habit of chewing betel-leaves with lime in Damodargupta, Kshemendra and Kalhana's works.

These are many notions about the Kashmiri way of life, which a study of these literary sources shows to be wrong. For instance, it is widely believed that Kashmiris generally sleep on the ground, but we find Damodargupta and Kshemendra telling us for our information that canopied beds *(vaitanikas),* couches *(paryanka),* cots *(shayya),* bedsheets *(astarana),* bedding *(shayana)* and pillows *(upadhana)* were very much used in early Kashmir[85]. They also mention the *pada-pitha* or the fool-stool on which ladies sat for doing their make-up. Among other articles of furniture we come to know of the seat *(asana, asanda)* and thick cushions *(vrisee)* which were used for sitting upon. A kind of carpet known as *patalika* was spread as a floor-covering,[86] besides the humble reed-mat.

Another fallacious notion, for which Alberuni was responsible, is that Kashmiris did not have any riding animals or carriages. "The Kashmiris are pedestrians. The noble among them ride in palanquins called *kutt* carried on the shoulders of men", writes the Arab scholar in his Kitab-ul-Hind[87]. But this is totally erroneous. There are numerous references to horses, carriages and elephants in literary sources. From Hsuan Tsang's travelogue, for instance, we come to know that the 7th century Chinese traveller was received during his visit to Kashmir in 631 AD by King

Durlabhavardhana's maternal uncle who had come with horse and carriage to escort him to the capital[88]. Incidentally Durlabhavardhana himself was an official in charge of the fodder for horses *(ashva-ghasa-kayastha)*[89]. King Ananta, as Kalhana tell us, was so fond of horses that he was exploited by his horse trainers during the early years of his reign[90]. And then, of course, there are several references to mounted troops in his chronicle, and a reference to the stables of elephants too which indicates that the elephant was used as aristocratic conveyance in Kashmir.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Having discussed how society was structured in early Kashmir and what were the mores and manners that characterized social life, let us have a glance at the belief systems that prevailed during the period and inspired and guided the people. As we have indicated already, the early Kashmir society derived its attitude to life and approach to reality from a sense of harmony with nature. This gave rise to a spiritual and cultural climate in which different religious faiths flourished side by side without any antagonism. Thus, even before history was recorded, we find the religious fabric of Kashmiri life woven out of mature strands of Buddhist, Shaiva and Vaishnava traditions with patterns of other heterogeneous modes of worship like that of the Naga cult revealing themselves on the margins. Not only did these different forms of worship co-exists peacefully, they also influenced each other through a process of osmosis of concepts and ideas. In the age of Nilamata, for instance, we notice popular Naga deities like Nila, Ananta (Shesha), Takshaka, Sushruvas etc. entering the Hindu pantheon. We also see Buddhist deities like Avalokiteshwara and Tara assume qualities and attributes of Hindu gods like Shiva and Durga. At a later stage, the Buddhist term of *shunyata* entered the lexicon of Kashmir Shaivism, though with a different interpretation. In the same manner, the Shaiva concept of universal consciousness provided the basis for the concept of reality in the Buddhist school of Yogachara.

Buddhism is said to have come to Kashmir in the 3rd century B.C. when Emperor Ashoka included it in his empire and sent his emissary Majjhantika to spread the Dhamma. We learn from the Mahavamsha and Ashokavadana that he had to contend with the local Nagas and their king Aravala, and only after convincing them of his superior spiritual powers was he able to win them over to the Buddhist way of life[91]. Buddhism supplanted the Naga cult, but there is enough evidence to show that its vestiges continued to survive long after that. In Kashmiri language the very name 'nag' came to denote 'a spring'. Both Kshemendra and Kalhana describe a popular festival of their times, the Takshaka Yatra[92], in which crowds of singing and dancing people joyfully participated.

Buddhism itself changed its entire complexion in Kashmir when Kanishka chose it as the venue for his Fourth Buddhist Council to "revise, review and reinterpret" the Buddhist texts so that the purity of its canon could be preserved. It was a monumental event at which 18 different sects accepted the conclusion of the Council, leading to the emergence of the Mahayana school. It was an altruistic doctrine with its emphasis on idealism, disinterested love, relief of the suffering of others and salvation for every living being. Mahayana deified Buddha and the concept of the divine Bodhisattvas came into being together with an entirely new pantheon of gods and goddesses. This had a tremendous appeal for the common people. Soon Kashmir became and important centre of the school, providing intellectual inputs to sustain it and sending missionaries and scholars from its soil to different lands for its propagation. Kashmir had its married Bhikshus long before other places in the country. However, it was in the 9th century that Buddhism started loosing ground to Shaivism and Vaishnavism, yet it continued to occupy an important position right up to the advent of Islam. King after king and queen after queen kept providing liberal patronage to it by building *viharas* and *stupas.* And at a time when the barbaric hordes of Mahmud Ghazni were putting thousands to the sword, Kashmiri artists were painting murals in Western Tibet.

Despite their reverence for Buddha, Karkota rulers of Kashmir were worshippers of Shiva and Vishnu. So were the rulers of the Utpala dynasty, who were ardent followers of Vaishnavism. With Buddhism receding to the background, Shaivism and Vaishnavism gained dominant position along with the worship of other Hindu gods. Festivals and rituals connected with them gained more popularity, impacting social life in many ways — including a renaissance in art and architecture. Shiva, however, was a popular deity from a very remote period. According to Kalhana Ashoka worshipped at an existing ancient temple, Shiva Vijayesha, when he came to Kashmir. He built two temples Shiva Ashokeshwara and Shiva Bhutesha[93] dedicated to Shiva. Ashoka's son Jalauka is said to have been a staunch Shaiva by faith. The Pashupata system of dualistic Shaivism was most popular in early Kahsmir, but soon numerous Shaiva sects, having their basis in Agamic Shaivism, came to flourish. Among these the Kaula, Krama and Trika schools integrated themselves into Kashmir Shaivism, acquiring monistic undertones eventually leading to a new non dualistic school founded by the sage Vasugupta. The new school interiorised the Agamic rituals and interpreted non-dualistic doctrines in accordance with its own monistic framework. The core concept of Kashmir Shaivism is that the Supreme Reality is one, pure and indivisible consciousness which manifests itself as the world and the phenomena. It is all-inclusive as nothing exists apart from it. Recognition of one's identity as Shiva or universal consciousness is, according to Kashmir Shaivism the ultimate experience of enlightenment. As it is the universal self of which all things, animate and inanimate, are a manifestation, Shaivism regards the world as real and celebrates the joy of creation. This has implications at the societal level also, with Shaivism rejecting all differences of caste, creed or sex and allowing one and all to be initiated into it. The Shaivas maintain that Shiva manifests himself as the universe through his Cosmic Energy Shakti, who is inseparable from him. At the temporal level, these two cosmic principles, one transcendental and the other immanent, are represented by the male and female principal. As Shaivas consider all females as manifestation of Shakti, they regard woman as equal to man so far as her social position is concerned. Even today in a Kashmiri Pandit marriage the bridegroom and the bride are worshipped as Shiva and Shakti.

In fact, Shaktism, which found expression in the mother - goddess cults, also became very popular in early Kashmir and is so even today. Considering God as a woman is something unique that Tantric vision of reality has contributed to religious thought. Intense devotion to the goddesses Sharika, Ragya, Tripura and Jwala as different forms of Jagadamba or the Mother of the Universe, is an integral part of Kashmiri Hindus' religious life. The Shaktas regard ultimate reality as feminine in essence, as we have pointed out earlier, and this is a factor that has contributed to reverence for women in the Kashmiri Hindu society. Being Mother, she is kind and benevolent and grants all wishes of the devotees even as she upholds the cosmic order and destroys the demons, they hold.

PRE-ISLAMIC KASHMIRI SOCIETY - IN A NUTSHELL

From the above analysis of the nature and character of the pre-Islamic Kashmiri society and its way of life we can safely arrive at some conclusions. We can characterize it as an open-minded, liberal and humane society, culturally advanced, intellectually alert and aesthetically conscious. The religion that formed the bedrock of its values and ideals allowed different beliefs and modes of worship to co-exist happily and cordially. In his Introduction to Edwin Muir's 'Life of Mohammet', well-known historian Ram Swarup has quoted Prudence Jones, spokesperson for the UK Pagan Federation to have observed: "All the world's indigenous and ethnic religions have three features in common: they are nature-venerating, seeing nature as a manifestation of divinity; secondly, they are polytheistic and recognize many gods as many manifestations; the third feature is that they all recognize the Goddess, the female aspect of Divinity as well as male"[94]. This in nutshell also sums up the religious outlook of the early Kashmiri society. It had several inherent weaknesses too.

ADVENT OF ISLAM

But when Islam came to Kashmiri in the 14th century with its ideology and beliefs, its theology and dogmas, its laws and codes of conduct, its lore and legends, everything that the Kashmiri society stood for earlier was upturned. Its entire social, spiritual and cultural fabric was shattered by the cataclysmic events that followed. Some scholars[95] say that long before Muslim rule was established there, Muslims had settled in Kashmir. They give examples of the presence of Turkic Muslim soldiers in Marsha's (1089-1111) army, and the employment of Turkic mercenaries by Bhikshachara (1120-1121) against Sussala as evidence. They quote Marco Polo as suggesting that a colony of Muslims existed in Kashmir in the 13th century. All this may well be true, but it was only when refugees and adventurers from different quarters, converged on Kashmir during the reign of King Suhadeva (1301-1320), that the Hindus lost Kashmir to Islam. Till then Kashmir may have known Muslims, but not Islam as such. The earlier attempts by Hisham bin Amru'l - Taghlibi, the Arab governor in Sindh, in the 8th century and Mahmud of Ghazni (998-1030) to invade Kashmir had ended in failure. Not much is known about the impact of Muslims who had settled earlier in Kashmir on the existing society, but it seems that their activities went unnoticed largely because of Hindu tradition of hospitality. But when Rinchana, a Buddhist fugitive from Ladakh, and Shah Mir, an adventurer from Swat, came seeking refuge, they colluded with Saiyyid Sharaf ud-Din alias Bulbulshah, who had arrived earlier, to subvert the very society that gave them shelter They succeeded in doing what Ghazni could not and established Islamic rule in Kashmir by subversion, perfidy and treachery.

ZULJU'S INVASION

Lacking political foresight and ignorant of Shah Mir's motives and ambitions, Suhadeva committed the folly of granting him a whole village for his sustenance. Earlier he had bestowed a *jagir* on Bulbul Shah also. Rinchana too got employment under Ramachandra, Suhadeva's commander-in-chief. And even as the two were consolidating their positions by clever means, Zulju or Zulqadr Khan, a Turk/Mongol chief invaded Kashmir at the head of a huge army of 70,000 Suhadeva fled to Kashtawar, without the Kottarajas or petty chiefs of border posts, coming to his help. He left people to the invader's mercy. Zulju ordered a massacre and his soldiers decimated thousands of people, enslaved thousands, burnt down villages, plundered towns and destroyed standing crops. After eight months of his devastating stay Zulju left taking fifty thousand Brahmins with him as slaves, but perished along with the prisoners and troops near Devasar Pass in a heavy snowfall. His ravages have been described in detail in Jonaraja's Rajataragini[96] and the Baharistan-i-Shahi[97]. Famine ensued as the Zulju's troops had destroyed all stores of grain, causing immense misery to the starving survivors.

It was Zulju's devastating invasion that actually scripted the fall of Kashmir into Muslim hands, for in the anarchic conditions created by it, Rinchana saw the opportunity for himself to grab power. According to Baharistan-i-Shahi, Rinchana, smuggled his men with weapons in the guise of merchants in to the fort where his master Ramchandra had shut himself up. In the bloody attack that followed Ramachandra and his men were treacherously killed and his family imprisoned. Even children were not spared and pregnant women's wombs were cut open. Seizing power in a coup, Rinchana later freed Ramachandra's son Rawanchandra and married his daughter Kota Rani.

RINCHANA'S COVERSION

Rinchana's conversion to Islam is one of the most controversial issues in the history of Kashmir Jonaraja says that he wanted to become a Hindu, but the Shaiva guru Devaswami refused to admit him into the fold". But this does not seem to be the fact for, as Prof A.Q Rafiqi has rightly pointed out, even if that were the case, Rinchana, being the king, could have approached any other Brahmana for it "Conversion from Buddhism to Hinduism or vice versa was not a new thing", Prof Rafiqi writes[100]. It is wrong, therefore, to put the blame on Devaswami, as some modern historians have done, simply because he was a Brahmin. Is it not possible that his hesitation had something to do with the revulsion caused by Rinchana's treachery?

Another story was floated which attributed Rinchana's acceptance of Islam to "divine grace". Rinchana, it is said, held discussions with both Hindu and Muslim scholars about what is "Truth", but none could satisfy him. He then decided to adopt the religion of the first person he should see in the morning. And who could that person be other than the "Sufi" Sharafu'd-Din Bulbul, offering *namaz* outside the palace? Rinchana became a Muslim adopting the Islamic name Sadr'ud-Din. The story "was concocted to glorify Islam and establish the miraculous power of Sayyid Sharafu'd-Din", says Prof. Rafiqi[101], and rightly so.

It seems more probable that Rinchana's conversion was manipulated by Shah Mir himself with the connivance of Bulbul Shah to establish Muslim rule in Kashmir. And thus the refugee from Ladakh became, the ruler of the Kashmir in 1320 AD; but died less than three years later. Kota Rani made Suhadeva's brother Udyanadeva the king and herself became his queen. Hindu rule was restored but not for long. Again a Turk (or Mongol) maurauder, Achala, swooped upon Kashmir and Udyanadeva fled to Ladakh. Showing exemplary courage, Kota Ram organised a resistance with the help of Bhatta Bhikshana, a Brahmin noble, and Shah Mir as well as some Kottarajas or clan-chiefs She managed to send the invader back, while Shah Mir gained popularity for his role Shah Mir now started scheming openly for grabbing the throne which he had been eyeing all along. Not that Kota Rani, who had proclaimed herself the ruler, failed to read his mind, but she played her cards badly. Instead of cutting Shah Mir to his size, she further strengthened his position by offering his administrative posts to his two sons. And not just that, when Shah Mir feigned illness, she sent her ablest general Bhatta Bhikshana to inquire of his health. Shah Mir murdered Bhatta Bhikshana treacherously and besieged Kota Rani in her palace at Andarkot. Overpowering the queen, he seized power in 1339 AD, laying the foundation of Muslim rule in Kashmir. Kota had to pay with her life for the folly of not having arrested the wily Mir immediately after Bhikshana's murder. That was the final act in the sordid drama that saw Hindu Kashmir loose out to Islam without ever getting a chance to recover.

HAMADANI'S ROLE

Both Shah Mir and Rinchana repaid the generosity and hospitality of the Hindu rulers as well as people with perfidy most foul and unimaginable. And though "no Arab legions marched into Kashmir with their swift horses and slender swords", as Prof. K.N.Pandita has observed[102], it will be wrong to think that the sword played no part in destroying its ancient society and changing forever its religious and demographic profile. Did not the blitzkriegs of Zulju and Achala create conditions of such abysmal chaos that it became easy for adventurers like Rinchana and Shah Mir to grab power without as much as a ripple? Shah Mir's ascension to the thrown as the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir triggered the inexorable chain of developments that had a terrible impact on the psyche of its hapless Hindus, making them retreat into a sulk from which they have still not been able to retrieve themselves. The period of transition to Islam is most crucial in the history of Kashmir, but unfortunately it has been presented in a manner that shows utter disregard (or should we say utmost contempt) for truth. It is extremely important to understand how people belonging to a society saturated with civilization and steeped in learning came to accept in vast numbers a religion totally incompatible with their deepest convictions and long established traditions. It must be noted that the process of Islamization of Kashmir that began during Rinchana and Shah Mir's time gathered a furious momentum with the arrival of Sayyid Mir AH Hamadani on the scene and proved to be an unmitigated disaster for Kashmiri Hindus - a nightmare of mass massacres, holocausts, genocidal attacks and enslavement. Let us have a look at the sequence of events that led to it before arriving at any conclusions. Sayyid Ali Hamadani, regarded one of the greatest missionaries of Islam by Kashmiri Muslims, arrived from Hamadan probably in 1381 with an entourage of 700 other Sayyids who it is widely believed fled Persia to escape persecution by Taimur. Earlier he had sent two of his cousins, Sayyid Taju'd-Din and Sayyid Hussain, to Kashmir "to explore the religious atmosphere of that country", according to Prof A Q.Rafiqi[103]. He was initiated in the Kubrawiya order of Sufi's by Ala'ud-Din Simnani who "believed that the duty of a Sufi was to preach his faith"[104].

The first thing Sayyid Ali Hamdani did in Kashmir was to admonish Sultan Qutbu'd-Din for having married two uterine sisters against the Islamic law and for dressing himself after the fashion of the Hindus. The Sultan quickly divorced one of the two sisters, and abandoned the Hindu costume to wear Muslim dress. Hamadani then set upon his proselytizing activities to fulfil Allah's command to him. He is said to have converted as many as 37,000 Hindus to Islam. He probably wanted Qutbu'd-Din "to make the persecution and torture of Hindus a state policy", as Prof. K.L.Bhan writes in his book 'Paradise Lost: Seven Exoduses of Kashmiri Pandits'[105]. But, as the author of Baharistan-i-Shahi says, "Sultan Qutbu'd-Din failed to propagate Islam in accordance with the wishes and aspiration of Amir Sayyid Ali Hamdani, he decided not to stay in Kashmir any more and left via Baramulla under the pretext of proceeding on a pilgrimage to Mecca"[106]. But he left for the Sultan a mandate in the shape of 'Zakhirat-ul-Mulk' which made it imperative for every Muslim ruler to treat his non-Muslim subjects (Zimmis) according to the covenant of Caliph Umar[107] Sayyid Ali's mandate divides the subject under a Muslim ruler into two categories - Muslim and Kafirs - and lists 20 most humiliating and degrading rules for the infidels to comply with absolute obedience. The mandate forbids non-Muslims to construct any new places of worship, to reconstruct any existing place of worship that may fall in to ruin, to ride horses with saddle and bridle, to carry weapons, to wear signet rings, to openly practice their customs and usages among Muslims to carry their dead near the graveyards of Muslims to mourn their dead loudly, to build their houses in the neighbourhood of Muslims, and to prevent Muslim travellers from staying at their place of worship or temples. They are also required to receive any Muslim traveller in to their houses and to provide him with hospitality for three days and to wear humble dress so that they may be distinguished from Muslims. Sayyid Ali does not mention any rights which non-Muslim could expect in return for obeying these twenty conditions, but concludes with the note that if they infringe any of them then Muslims have a right to kill them. An open licence to kill those who do not believe in Islam!

It was Sayyid Ali Hamdani who got the temple of Kalishri near Fatehkadal in Srinagar demolished and converted into a Khanqah, now known as Khanqah-i-Maula[108] "Sayyid Ali's proselytizing activities", writes Prof. A.Q.Rafiqi, "are highly extolled by both medieval and modern scholars. But none of them gives any details of the method adopted by him at his work". Rafiqi adds[109] : "There is no doubt, however, that Islam received great impetus because of Sayyid Ali and his follows... He left his deputies at a number of places, which were great Hindu centres of those days, such as Pompur, Avantipura and Vijabror. These followers of Sayyid Ali established Khanqahs, and the network of branches which gradually emerged became important centres of preaching and proselytization"[110].

SIKANDAR BUTSHIKAN

The proselytizing frenzy of the Sayyids reached a crescendo in Kashmir during the reign of Sikandar Butshikan or Sikandar the Iconoclast. At the behest of Sayyid AH Hamadani's son Sayyid Muhmmad Hamdani who came to Kashmir in 1393, Sultan Sikandar let loose a reign of unprecedented terror against the Hindu population. "To him", writes the author of Baharistan-i-Shahi, "goes the credit of wiping out the vestiges of infidelity and heresy from the mirror of the conscience of the dwellers of these lands", adding that "immediately after his arrival, Sultan Sikandar, peace be on him, submitted to his religious supremacy and proved his loyalty to him by translating his words into deeds"[111]. One of the first to be converted by the Sayyid was Sikandar's minister Suha Bhatt. who was given the Muslim name of Malik Safu'd-Din. The two at the instigation of Mir Sayyid Mohammad Hamdani committed the most barbaric atrocities on Kashmiri Hindus, giving them no option but to accept Islam, exile or death. Hassan writes: "Sikandar meted out greatest oppression to the Hindus. It was notified in the city that if a Hindu does not became a Muslim, he must leave the country or be killed. As a result, some of the Hindus fled away, some accepted Islam and many Brahmans consented to be killed and gave their lives. It is said Sikandar collected by these methods about three *khirwars* (240 kilograms) of sacred threads (from Hindu converts) and burnt them... All the Hindu books of learning were collected and thrown into Dal Lake and were buried beneath stones and earth"[112].

Sikandar imposed the Jiziya on Hindus, prevented them from applying *tilak* on their foreheads and prohibited the selling of wine, dancing of women, music and gambling He derived a peculiar sadistic pleasure from destroying Hindus temples and smashing their idols, from which he got his notorious nickname. Hassan says:

"This country (Kashmir) possessed from the times of Hindu kings many temples which were like the wonders of the world. Their workmanship was so fine and delicate that one found himself bewildered at their sight. Sikandar goaded by feelings of bigotry destroyed them and levelled them with the earth and with their materials built many mosques and Khanqahs. In the first instance he turned his attention towards the Martanda temple built by Ramadeva (it was actually Lalitaditya who had built it) on Mattan Karewa. For one full year he fried to demolish it but failed. At last in sheer dismay he dug out stones from its base and having stored enough wood in their place set fire to it. The gold gilt paintings on its walls were totally destroyed and the walls surrounding its premises were demolished. Its ruins even now strike wonder in men's minds. At Bijbehara three hundred temples including the famous Vijayeshwara temple which was partially damaged by Shahabu'd-Din were destroyed and with the material of the latter a mosque was built and on its site a Khanqah which is even now known as Vijayeshwar Khanqah"[113].

Like some possessed maniacs, the iconoclasts went on destroying one magnificent temple after another, one splendid image after another — Martanda, Vishaya, Ishana, Chakrabhrit, Tripureshvara. Sureshwari, Parihaspur, Mahashri, the temple built by Tarapida — all became targets of their frenzy. Jonaraja, the contemporary historian says with anguish : "There was no town, no village, no wood where Suha and the Turushka left the temples of Gods unbroken"[114]. Adds R.K.Parmu : "Then they rebuilt the Jama Masjid in Nowhatta, and the mosque of Khanqah Maula was built in commemoration of Sayyid AH Hamadani. Two other big mosques were built in Bhavan and Bijbehara. All these mosques were built from the material of the demolished Hindu temples; and the spacious courtyard of the Lokeshvari temple in Srinagar was converted into the Mazar-i-Salatin."[115]

Parmu blames it on the "fanatical zeal" of the "malevolent" Sayyids who in their "fiendish exultation gave Sikandar their most coveted title of 'Butshikan', the iconoclast..."[116] Prof. A.Q. Rafiqi, is clear that Sikandar's orthodox policy was not dictated by political reasons but on the advice of Mir Muhammad Hamdani[117]. Genocidal attacks and barbaric decrees created so much terror and panic among the defenceless Hindus that they fled for their lives - across the Smithan Pass to neighbouring Kashtawar and via Batote Kashmiri '*Bhatta wath*' or the path of the Bhattas). This, as Prof. K.L. Bhan points out, was the first mass of exodus Kashmiri Hindus from Kashmir[118]

The orgy of violence and proselytizing frenzy continued unabated into the reign of Sultan AH Shah (1413-1420). The renegade Suha and the demoniac Sayyids went berserk in their attempt to destroy Hinduism root and branch. The whole valley was bathed in the blood of the innocents. Jonaraja draws a heart-rending picture of the plight of Hindus, in particular Brahmins, of Kashmir comparing them to fish tormented by a fisherman in a closed river. He says that their religious ceremonies and processions were banned; heavy taxes were levied on them; and to starve them their traditional allowances were stopped, forcing them to become beggars. For a mouthful of food, "they went from house to house, lolling out their tongues like dogs"[119]. Some roamed in the streets in the disguise of Muslims to save their emaciated families from hunger. To escape oppression and to preserve their religious identity, many of them ran away from their land through bye-roads as the main roads were closed, "the son leaving his father behind and the father leaving his son". Passing though difficult terrain, many of them died of scorching heat and illness, many of starvation due to scanty food. But not all succeeded in escaping. Many of those who remained behind committed suicide by taking poison, many by drowning or self-immolation. Many hanged themselves, many jumped from precipices. Numerous Hindus were killed brutally while many were forced to convert to Islam.

Deeply disturbed by the suffering of his co-religionists on the eve of Zainu'l-Abidin's ascension to throne, Jonaraja laments :

"As storms do with trees, or locusts with paddy crops, wicked people belonging to his (Sikandar's) faith worked havoc with the traditions and usages of Kashmir"[120]. His lament viewed against the background of Suha Bhatta's role in the misery heaped up on Kashmiri Hindus raises a significant question : how to explain the behaviour of the neo-converts towards their erstwhile co-religionists? Purna, the barber who instigated Zainu'l-Abidin's son Haidar Shah to commit barbarities against the Hindus is another case of the rabidity of the neo-converts. He got their limbs amputated, their tongues and noses chopped off and had them impaled. Other neo-converts too joined the orthodox Muslims to provoke the king to commit inhuman atrocities on Hindus, to desecrate and loot their temples, confiscate their lands and prohibit their religious practices. Such was the intensity of the repression and social injustice that many Hindus were compelled to give up their faith, dress like Muslims and declare that they were not Bhattas (*"nabhattoham"*), relates Shrivara[121].

Analysing their reasons for Suha Bhatta's brutal persecution of Hindus, Prof. K.N.Dhar says that being a neo-convert he could not have adopted a go-slow policy as that "would have been misunderstood and also misinterpreted"; he, therefore, "had to look like the most devout Muslim and the most zealous partner in this 'Jihad' against the Hindus"[122]. Perhaps he is right. The neo-converts must have behaved the way they did because they would not have liked to loose the privileges that their conversion brought to them. Or it could be that Sikandar was using Suha Bhatta as a willing instrument to serve the cause of Islam. Whatever may have been the case, the onslaught of the Sultans and the Sufis totally shattered the social fabric of Kashmiri Hindus, leaving them bewildered and stunned.

ZAINU'L ABIDIN

King Zainu'l-Abidin did not join the fundamentalists against the Hindus, not only because he was tolerant and broadminded, but also because he needed the Brahmins to run the administration which had been badly affected by their forced exodus. The neo-converts were "the scum of the Hindu population" and could not be depended upon in running the affairs of the state. But Zainu'l-Abidin's policy had other implications too for the Hindus. True, he coaxed them to return, revived their religious practices, rebuilt their temples and gave them high positions in the administration; but he also caused a vertical split in the Kashmiri Hindu society by declaring Persian as the court language. This sub-divided them into Karkuns and the Bhasha Bhattas. While the former studied Persian to enter government services, the latter kept Sanskrit learning alive and administered to the religious needs of their community. Unfortunately, his decision to recall the Hindus also led to their division. The repatriated Brahmins called themselves Bhanamasis and the indigenous Brahmins became the Malamasis. Although these appellations did not involve any social disability, they did give birth to a number of social taboos.

Zainu'l-Abidin's cultural policies also proved to be double-edged. His making Persian the official language stopped the development of the Kashmiri language which was assuming the form of a distinct language at that time, in its tracks. Also, by inviting hundreds of craftsmen from Central Asia and other Muslim countries, he gave a fillip to arts and crafts on the one hand, but on the other hand he dealt a crippling blow to indigenous industry. The same can be said about fine arts. Hundreds of musicians from West Asia and Central Asian countries thronged to Kashmir along with their musical instruments. The result was that local traditions in music and dance suffered a premature demise. In fact, it was Zainu'l-Abidin who brought Kashmir into the West Asian cultural orbit, though that did not have to do anything with Islam directly.

SHIA RULERS

A near total transformation of the peace-loving, gentle and liberal society of Kashmiri Hindus into a brutal, parochial and closed society of believers in Islam was more or less accomplished by the 15th century by the Islamic zealots. The gruesome game of mass massacres, forcible conversions, arson and plunder, desecration and destruction of temples pursued by Sunni bigots was continued by Shia rulers with equal ferocity and zeal. Every method, howsoever barbarous, was used to crush idolatry and establish the faith of Islam by the Muslim rulers as state policy. Persecution of Hindus and orgies of cruelty against them reached the highest point in the time of Malik Musa Raina, the Shia Prime Minister of Sultan Fateh Shah (1506-1516), under the guidance of Mir Shamsu'd-Din Iraqi, a

Nurbakshia missionary and a religious bigot they like of whom Kashmir had never known. Shamsu'd-Din Iraqi found a most co-operative partner in Musa Raina in propagating Islam using most revulsive tactics of terror and repression. And who but the unfortunate Brahmins could have been their targets for daring still to stick to their faith. One recoils with horror when one comes to know of the savage methods they employed for the mission.

The author of Baharistan-i-Shahi says:

"...With the support and authority of Malik Musa Raina, Amir Shamsu'd-Din Mohammad undertook a wholesale destruction of all those (the ones rebuilt by Zainu'l-Abidin) idol houses as well as the total ruination of the very foundation of infidelity and disbelief. On the site of every idol house he destroyed, he ordered the construction for offering prayers after the Islamic manner. The idolatry and heresy which had existed prior to his coming to this place (Kashmir) were effectively replaced by his preaching and propagation of Islamic and practices... It is publicly known as well as emphatically related that during his lifetime, with the virtuous efforts and elaborate arrangements made by the fortunate Musa Raina, twenty four thousand families of staunch infidels and stubborn heretics were ennobled by being converted to the Islamic faith"[123].

Quoting Hassan's Tarikh-i-Kashmir, Prof. K.N. Pandita observes in his footnote to the passage that the twenty-four thousand families were converted by force and compulsion *(gahran waabran)*[124], while it is recorded in the Tohfat-ul-Ahbab that on the instance of Shamsu'd-Din Iraqi, Musa Raina had issued orders that everyday, 1,500 to 2,000 infidels be brought to the doorstep of Mir Shamsu'd-Din by his followers. They would remove their sacred thread *(zunnar)* administer *kelima* to them, circumcise them and make them eat beef[125].

The means that Iraqi and Musa Raina adopted to convert Hindus to Shi'ite Islam are indeed too shocking to describe. Here are some examples from the Tohfat: "With his band of Dervishes and Sufis, he would descend on a village. Terrorise the men folk and enter a Hindu household. Kill their cow and cook its meat and then forcibly stuff with beef the mouths of the women folk and make them recite the *kelima,* supervising these operations himself"[126].

Once when the Hindus had gathered at the Hari Parbat to celebrate *roz-i-bahar* (spring festival) with music and dance and chanting, Iraqi and his Sufis attacked the revellers and killed some of them. The others ran away. He then razed the temple and broke the idol[127].

Another instance is that of forcible circumcision of hundreds of people by Iraqi and his band of Sufis, described graphically in the Tufat-ul-Ahbab. Tohfat says that Iraqi forcibly circumcised even the aged people by thousands and hundreds daily in the outskirts of the city[128].

As for the temples demolished by Iraqi, they were so numerous that the author of Tohfat says that "his pen become helpless in counting of these"[129]

CHAK RULERS

The butchery of Hindus and their forcible conversion to Islam continued during the Chak rule which followed the end of the Shahmiri Sultanate. But even before the Chak rule was formally established, Kaji Chak as Prime Minister of Fateh Shah, devoted himself with fiendish zeal to persecute Hindus and to convert them to Islam. Prof. K.L. Bhan seems to be right when he compares him and the other Chak rulers to bloodthirstly hounds. Bhan writes: "He initiated a systematic and planned campaign for the desecration and dismantling of Hindu temple and sacred places.. It is attributed to him that he used to get 900 KPs (Kashmiri Pandits —Hindus) beheaded everyday for not having accepted Islam as their only mode of faith. Such kind of cruelty was unheard before"[130].

Shuka, who was an eye witness to the barbarities and misdeeds of the Chaks describes the pitiable plight of the Brahmins during their ruthless rule in this manner:

"One thousand cows used to be killed every day, without any opposition, under the orders of the kings of the house of Chaka and for them. The Brahmans had been overpowered by the mlechhas in the same way as the sun is overpowered by darkness. The means of their livelihood were destroyed. They did not remain in the country even as deer do not stay in the forest which is burnt. As they left the country, they sometimes, like jackals, felt alarm in the way, and sometimes they were the objects of laughter and of reproach" [131].

Shuka's description is full of pathos, but that is what the onslaught of Islam had reduced the Hindus in Kashmir to Describing the situation on the eve of Akbar's rule, Shuka records:

"Formerly, the kings of the house of Chakka used to exact an annual amount fine from the Brahmans owing to their animosity towards the people of the caste. In every house a Brahman of good family and character who maintained his own caste used to pay an annual tribute to the king For the preservation of his sacred thread, a Brahman annually paid a tribute of forty *panas* to the king..."[132]

Oppressed, hunted, tormented and crushed by the burden of heavy exactions, the Hindus, particularly the Brahmins, somehow got a brief respite during the rule of Akbar, who treated them with sympathy. But under the later Mughals it was the same story of forcible conversions, demolition of temples, discrimination, and rape continued, perhaps because Jihad in Islam is a perpetual ordainment.

SOME FALLACIOUS MYTHS

One is indeed shocked to note that inspite of the massive evidence of the suffering of the Hindus under the highly oppressive Muslim rule in Kashmir, testified by medieval historians, Hindu as well Muslim, some modern historians like P.N.K Bamzai, Mohmmad Ishaq Khan and R L. Hangloo, are trying to perpetuate the myth that Islam spread in Kashmir not by force but through peaceful persuasion by Sufis and saints. In their eagerness to salvage the image of Islamic missionaries and Muslim rulers of Kashmir, they not only try to present "palpable falsehoods" and outright concoctions as facts, but go as far as justifying the atrocities on Hindus by putting the blame on the victims themselves! It is the Brahmins they allege, who asked for it by introducing and sustaining an exploitative and oppressive social order based on the pernicious caste system In his book 'The State in Medieval Kashmir', R.L. Hangloo blames the Brahmins for appropriating the agricultural surplus of the lands granted to them by the king as *agraharas.*[133] Describing the Brahmins as members of the landed aristocracy, he accuses them of providing the justification for their "dominance by exploiting people who were deeply steeped in superstition, blind belief and fear of the supernatural in an archaic manner"[134]. The *agrahara* - based economy, however, declined, he says, and the Brahmins' "religious authority" was undermined with the growth of the expanding craft production sector. "Popular reaction, indeed popular protest against the unjust acts of those in power, took the non-violent form of mass conversion to the new world view, i.e. Islam"[135]. "People turned away from their faith, he says, "not only due to external elements like force or persuasion; indeed, these were effective only because Hindu society and polity had crated favourable conditions for them"[136] Hangloo also accuses the Brahmins of living off the gifts of the worshippers.[137]

We do not have the time or space in this paper to expose the fallacies involved in these wild statements which have no basis in actual facts. But it would be still pertinent to ask some questions. Did not the new Muslim dispensation offer lavish land grants to every Sayyid, every missionary, every Sufi, every noble who happened to come to Kashmir from abroad? And come indeed they did in large numbers. Right from the day Muslim rule was established in Kashmir *vast jagirs* were bestowed upon Muslim mullahs and marauders alike for performing their religious duty of propagating Islam? Is it not a fact that inspite of all the inducements - not only by way of land grants or high positions in the administration but encouragement of every kind - Islam found only a few converts to it till force of unprecedented magnitude was used to compel people to adopt the new faith? Some glimpses of these coercive methods we have tried to give above, but there are numerous hair - raising instances that can be given. Did not the mosques and the Khanqahs and other religious endowments of Muslims own large chunks of lands which gave rise to another class of feudal landlords who appropriated the peasants' surplus in the form of labour and their share in the produce? Did not the Muslim clergy, the *mullahas*, the *pirs*, the *imams*, the reciters of the Quran, accept lavish gifts from the common people, and did that not tantamount to "exploiting people who were steeped in superstition"?

R.L. Hangloo's imagination runs wild while describing the role of Shaiva *mathikas* as exploitative and the Shaivacharyas as feudal landlords.[138] The jumps from assumption to assumption, from conclusion to conclusion, misrepresenting and distorting what is written in the Shaivagamas. The fact is that the land owned by the temples and *mathikas* was cultivated by the population of the village as a whole, and some of the farmers could have cultivated the temple is return for some share in the yield also. Zainu'l-Abidin restored these lands to the Brahmans so that they would increase the yield of the fallow lands by cultivating them.

Taken at the societal level, the temples and *mathikas* provided social security to people by feeding the entire community and ensuring that no one goes hungry.

That rituals about which so much noise has been made both by Hangloo and Ishaq Khan are considered by the Hindus only as a ladder leading to a higher spiritual level. They do not have a central part in the values and attitudes of the Hindus which are subtle and lofty. The central part is "a sublime quest of the Infinite" Hangloo is either totally ignorant or deliberately silent about the epistemology of Hindu rituals which provide a link between the mundane and the sacred. He should have noted that the Shaiva concept of liberation is the expansion of the self to an extent that it includes the whole universe.

One may frown upon the Shaivacharyas, but what about the institution of Shaikh-ul-Islam which shows existence of a clear alliance between the clergy and the king? And pray in what way did Islam give a new direction to people, as Hangloo states, by imposing the totalitarian tyranny of a monotheistic God and snatching away from them the freedom to worship go in any form and any manner suited to their individual disposition?

To reduce everything to economic criteria in one case and to ignore these criteria in another is the height of negationism. Was the nature of the Islamic state in Kashmir any thing but feudal and exploitative? And to present all the violence, the massacres, the bloodshed, the arson, the plunder, the rapes, the atrocities committed against those Hindus who refused to give up their faith as though they never took place - is that what Hangloo means by moving away from "stereo-types of historiography"? Hangloo goes in to raptures when he talks of the common people going to participate in the Friday prayers and enjoying the pleasures of eating together.[139] But what about the tradition of visiting gardens on spring and other festivals that has continued among the Hindus since the time of

Nilamata? Why did Mir Shamsu'd-Din Iraqi and his band of Nurbakshiya Sufis swoop upon the innocent Hindus celebrating the festivals of almond blossoms at Hari Parbat?

Ishaq Khan's theory that Islam spread in Kashmir not by force, but by "diffusion" of its doctrines as preached by the Sufis, and the attraction that the Hindu masses felt towards "Shariah - oriented culture"[140], is equally baseless as it has nothing to do with the actual facts of history inspite of all the labour he has taken to illustrate this point. Far from being egalitarian or just, the Shariat or Muslim law is highly discriminatory, complicated and cruel. It has one set of rules for Muslims and another for non-Muslims. It would be useful to quote the well known historian K.S. Lal in this context. He writes:

"In the Islamic religion human beings are divided into two distinct groups — Muslims and infidels. Citizenship rights are given to Muslims only, non-Muslims at the most can be given the status of Zimmis or second class citizens. For Allah raises some people *(quams)* and degrades others" [141] Killing or looting another Muslim by another Muslim is regarded as *kufr* "But the treatment meted out to an infidel should be opposite of it because the two are different from one another in the eyes of Allah and his Prophet"[142]. According to Lal, the Hadis forbid Muslims to wish idolaters if they happen to meet them or to visit them to inquire about their health if they fall ill. And if a Kafir dies and his son becomes a Muslim, then that Muslim "is not to honour the *(wasiat)* of his Kafir father". Not only that the Zimmi "cannot be a witness against the Muslim; he cannot be the guardian of his child who is a Muslim" [143]. And more than anything else, he has to pay the poll-tax or Jiziyah to be able to live in a Muslim state. Jiziyah, in fact, has been an instrument of humiliation, conversion and exploitation of non-Muslims. In Kashmir all Muslim rulers imposed Jiziyah on Hindus, except Zainu'l-Abidin who reduced it and Akbar who abolished it. The punishments prescribed in the Shariat are cruel and barbarous - cutting of hands and feet for theft, stoning to death for adultery and so on. The triple *talaq* for women and the onus on a woman to prove rape in presence of male witnesses can be called anything but just. To cap it the evidence of two women as equal to that of one man, shows how discriminatory Muslim law is against woman. Shariat also institutionalises slavery, and the enslavement of people is justified by it. In fact concepts like "*mal-i-ghaneem*" or "*mujahid*", "*ghazi*" and hate-words like *jihad, zimmi, munkiir, kafir, mushrik* do not point to anything like the "universal brotherhood" and "equality" which both Hangloo and Ishaq Khan consider to be the basis of what the latter calls "Shariah-oriented culture". It is impossible to believe that at any stage in the propagation of Islam in Kashmir there was a dialogue between the preachers of Islam - the Sufis if you want to call them - at which masses of Hindus would have shown any eagerness to embrace such a "culture".

The theories of both Hangloo and Ishaq Khan need to be analysed in detail. Suffice it to say here that the brotherhood preached in Islam is only the brotherhood of Muslims. And not even that, for are not the Arabs, according to Islam, the chosen people? "Is it not the Prophet himself", asks Arun Shourie in his book 'Eminent Historians', "who warned that 'he who is treacherous to the Arabs will not be included in my intercession and will not receive my love'?" And among the Arabs too "God chose the Quraish (the tribe of Prophet) as the best of people", Shourie quotes Hadis to inform us[144].

Hangloo is a Marxist historian as is betrayed from his dedicating his book. 'The Medieval State in Kashmir' to Harbans Mukhia, and quoting intensively from D.D. Kosambi whom Arun Shourie describes as "The grand-father, so to say, of present Marxists historians". As for Ishaq Khan, his Islamic reflexes seem to be at work despite what he has said about "ideological intolerance" in societies. Arun Shourie has so aptly summed up the line that Marxist historians "hawk" : "In a word, both corruption and evil on the one hand and exploitation on the other are germane to, they are inherent in Hinduism : Hinduism is Brahminism; Brahminism is that "ism" which serves the interests of the Brahmins; these interests can only be served by the exploitation and oppression of people of lower castes. Hence Hinduism is necessarily an arrangement for the exploitation and oppression of the mass of people" [145]. In the case of Islam, the party line, according to Shourie is : "Islam equals peace, equality, brotherhood, the ascent towards monotheism". And, therefore, "the aggression, the butchery, the devastations committed by the Islamic rulers are to be sanitised..."[146]

Ishaq Khan's attitude, in fact, is so hostile towards Brahmins that he appears to be grinding his teeth every time he refers to the word "Brahman", branding the entire community as caste-ridden. We have already seen that the caste-system was not at all rigid in the early Kashmiri society, not the least in the period when Muslim rule was established. Ishaq Khan is either extremely biased or totally ignorant of Hindu religious traditions and social attitudes prevailing at that time. What Islam introduced in Kashmir was not, as we have earlier pointed out, brotherhood but conflict and not equality but "religious totalitarianism" that "tortures humane realities and immobilizes nobler sensibilities", to borrow the words of the eminent scholar Dr. Lokesh Chandra[147]. The basic difference between the attitudes generated by Islamic monotheism and the polycentric attitude to reality of Hindus is best summed up by Dr. Lokesh Chandra in the following words:

> "The desert with its endless and un-varying landscape sublimated the immensity of the One Vast Sand into The One Ultimate. The Single Highest became the crowning extreme. Extremism is inbuilt in monotheism. Polycentrism emphasizes the principle of Many, and merges divine reality with the world. It is a plurality of divine forces functioning in life and world. It is a plurality of divine forces functioning in life and nature. It is the possibility of multiplicity of perceptions at the highest levels of spiritual perfection"[148].

WHY WE LOST OUT TO ISLAM

But the question is whether the Hindu community of Kashmir has been able to stand up to the challenge of Islam? In this regard, R.K. Parmu does not "exonerate" them "from their covardice and pusillanimity". He says : "Most of them cowardly embraced Islam simply to be allowed to exist in the land of their birth, while a large number committed suicide. When their religion, culture, life and liberty were in danger, they should have made a common cause and offered united resistance especially when they predominated numerically. We are told that only the Brahmans resisted long and in consequence were tormented and tortured with the result that only a couple of thousands were left behind to preserve and maintain ancient religion and traditional culture. Other castes, who outnumbered the Brahman community exceedingly, failed to make any sacrifice"[149]. Parmu is right to a certain extent, but the matter is not as simple as that. It is not in Kashmir but in the whole of India that the sword of Islam had cut a large swathe for itself, not entirely due to what is often termed as the degeneration of the Hindu society. The main factor, as pointed out by Sita Ram Goel was "the superiority of the Turkish art of warfare in terms of strategy, tactics, mobility, military morale and arsenal" [150]. Another important reason was the political failure of their state system. And this applies to Kashmir also. The Kottarajas or the petty clan-chiefs did not rally behind Suhadeva or Kota Rani when Zulju or Achala attacked. Had they done so, the history of Kashmir would have been totally different. It was unfortunate that the last Hindu rulers did not maintain "standing armies on a permanent war footing". But, perhaps, the greatest reason was that the society during the Hindu period in Kashmir was sophisticated and highly cultured despite the definite signs of decay and degeneration that had become visible in the 11th century itself. Pitted against barbarians with their bloodthirsty nature and violent propensities, the Hindus had little chance. Islamic ideology had brutalized its followers, with the instinct for war and thirst for blood becoming their distinguished traits; and for them high humanitarian values had no meaning. The message of Islam was clear and unambiguous: total annihilation of those who do not have faith in it. For Kafirs or infidels, it had only one option : conversion or death. But as death can not normally be an option, there were many who were compelled to choose conversion.

As we have said, the Hindu society of Kashmir lost out to Islam, as it was too soft and liberal in its attitude to people of other faiths. Suhadeva allowed all the Muslim fugitives and adventurers who came to him for refuge to settle in Kashmir without even asking as much as a question. Bulbul Shah and some other "Sufis" had been all along there, performing their religious practices, but no ones asked them what they were doing. The Hindu rulers did not get alerted even after Rinchana's treacherous coup. The people also appeared to be so indifferent to their own fate, that even after Shah Mir's perfidy, they accepted him without any murmur. Because of being ignorant of what was in store for them, they thought that it did not matter much who ruled them, provided he ruled. It is this passivity that cost them dearly.

Resentment and organized resistance to the excesses of Islamic rulers, however, did show on several occasions. Towards the end of Ali Shah's reign, for instance, Brahmins came out of their hiding and tried to rally around one Ratnakara, whom they made their leader. Their object was to gain some respite for themselves by paying the Jiziya. But as they were organising themselves, a Muslim Mullah, Malanu'd-Din got suspicious of their activities. Fearing that they might rise in rebellion he got him arrested and imprisoned[151]. Another uprising took place during the rule of Fateh Shah and Kaji Chak, this time under the leadership of Nirmalakantha, a scholar. Fiding the oppression too much to bear, the Brahmins organized themselves and reconverted the Hindus who had been forcibly converted to Islam earlier by Shamsu'd-Din Iraqi and Musa Raina. He tried to bring to naught the disgrace and humiliation piled on the Hindus by Iraqi and had a council with his followers. Their activities, however, alerted one Khwaja Mir Ahmad, who was close to Kaji Chak and he asked for permission to act against them. And Nirmalkantha and hundreds of his supporters were mercilessly butchered[152].

It seems that persecutions and mass conversions had dealt a great blow to the Brahmins, but had not altogether broken their spirit. Some neo-converts during Musa Raina's government would place their haunches on the Quran and worship their idols. The incident has been recorded in some detail in the Baharistan-i-Shahi thus :

"During the government of Malik Musa Raina, all the depraved heretics of this land had been converted to Islam. [But] with the help of some of the chiefs of this land, some of them had reverted to the customs of the infidels and the polytheists. These apostates had resumed idolatry. Some of the infidels related that during the hours of offering prayers and worshipping of idols, they would place a copy of the holy Quran under their haunches to make a seat to sit upon. This idol worshipping proceeded even while they sat on the divine book. When the news and details of these doings were brought to Amir Shamsu'd-Din Muhammad Iraqi, he summoned Malik Kaji Chak to him. Accompanied by Malik Ali and Khwaja Ahmad, his two councellors and admnistrators, Malik Kaji Chak presented himself before the venerable Amir Shamsu'd-Din Iraqi...".[153]

Thereupon Kaji Chak decided to carry out a wholesale massacre of the infidels, says Baharistan-i-Shahi. In the year 1518, about seven to eight hundred Hindus were put to death[154]. These included the cream of the Brahmin society of the time.

However, Kashmiri Brahmins survived these genocidal attacks and pogroms by cannibalistic maniacs and their religious totalitarianism even though they continued through the entire period of Muslim rule. The Kashmiri Brahmins' pagan and polytheistic beliefs based on reverence for life seem to have survived the Islamic challenge. "A man can be defeated but not destroyed", said Ernest Hemming way in one of his best novels 'The Old Man and the Sea', and this is true of the Kashmiri Brahman's present predicament also. Today he has again been forced to flee by Islamic fundamentalists from Kashmir, his home for millennia, as he was in the days of Sikandar Butshikan. But he is still clinging tenaciously to the values and traditions evolved by the early Kashmiri society, in a weather that is the stormiest he has ever seen.

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66. R.T., 1 247, 380, VIII 2885

67. K.M., v. 606

68. Samayamatrika II, v. 67

69. See Ajay Mitra Shastri, Kuttanimata of Damodargupta, p. 143

70. R.T.VII, 928-931

71. K.M., vv 101-102, 739, 866

72. S.C.Ray, Early History and Culture of Kashmir, p. 256

73. Ibid, p. 256

74. Kuttanimata of Damodargupta, p. 147

75. Ibid, p. 148

76. Ibid, vv. 739, 866

77. Yule, Marco Polo, I, p. 166, referred to by S.C.Ray in "Early History and Culture of Kashmir

78. R.T., VII, 1149

79. R.T., 119; Samayamatrika, ii, 25, 71

80. Narmamala, Ii, 123-125

81. *Si-Yu-Ki* (tro Beat) I, p. 88, quoted by S.C.Ray is 'Early History and Culture of Kashmir, p. 250

82. Narmamala, II, 123-125

83. Nilamata, w. 450-453

84. R.T., 111, 362, VII 1863

85. See Moti Chandra, Kshemendra aur Unka Samaj, p. 70; Ajay Mutra Shashtri, Kuttanimata of Damodargupta, pp. 161-62

86. Narmamala, I 80

87. India trs. Sachau; I p. 206

88. Natters, *On Yuan Chwang, I,* p. 262

89. R.T., III, 489

90. R.T., VII, 189

91. Mahavamsha, XII, 3. Quoted by R.C.Ray in 'Early History and Culture of Kashmir', p. 156

92. Samayamatrika, II, 88; R.T., 1, 222

93. R.T., I. 105-107

94. Introduction to Reprint, Voice of India, p. 21

95. Prof. A.Q. Rafiqi, Sufishm in Kashmir, pp. 1-4

96. Jonaraji Calls him Dalcha, J.C.Dutta, Kings of Kashmira, Vol. HI, pp. 16-18

97. Baharistan-i-Shaki (trs. K.N. Pandita) calls him Zulchu, pp. 17-19

98. B.S., (trs. K. N. Pandita), p. 19

99. Jonaraja's R.T. (trs. R.C.Dutt), p. 21

100. Suffism in Kashmir, p. 9

101. Ibid,p.9

102. B.S., Introduction, p. xxviii

103. Sufism in Kashmir, p. 34

104. Ibid, p. 30

105. p. 8

106. B.S., (trs. K.N.Pandita), p. 36

107. A.Q. Rafiqi, Sufism in Kashmir, p.81

108. B.S., (trs..N.Pandita), p.36; A.Q.Rafiqi, Sufism in Kashmirp-88

109. A.Q.Rafiqi, Sufism in Kashmir, p. 38

110. Ibid, p, 38

111. B.S., (trs. K.N.Pandita), pp. 37-38

112. Tarikh-i-Hassan, Vol. I, p. 180

113. Ibid, pp. 392-94

114. J.C. Dutt, Kings of Kashmira, p. 60

115. History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir, p. 126

116. Ibid, p. 124

117. Sufism in Kashmir, p. 101

118. Paradise Lost, p. 70

119. Kings of Kashmira, p. 67
120. Zaina Rajtarangini, IV, 37-78
121. Ibid, trs. Prof. Kashi Natha Dhar
122. Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture Series III, Sanskrit Chronicles and Sultans of Kashmir, p. 81
123. B.S., (trs. K.N.Pandita), pp. 93-94
124. Ibid, pp. 105-106
125. Ibid, pp. 106
126. Tohfatu-ul-Ahbab, f. 157
127. Ibid, ff. 190-91
128. Ibid
129. Ibid
130. Paradise lost, p. 15
131. J.C. Dutt, Kings of Kashmira, p. 421
132. Ibid, p. 420-21
133. The State in Medieval Kashmir, pp. 21 -28
134. Ibid. p. 127-128
135. Ibid. p. 53
136. Ibid. p. 59-60
137. Ibid. pp. 22-23
138. Ibid sec p. 22-24
139. Ibid, p. 57
140. Kashmir's Transition to Islam, p. 5
141. Theory and Practice of The Muslim State in India, p.52
142. Ibid
143. Ibid
144. Eminent Historians, p. 149
145. Ibid, p. 91

146. Ibid

147. Lokesh Chandra, The Broken Pitcher of Dogmas, Quarterly Dialogue 4.No. 2, p. 13

148. 148. Ibid, pp. 18

149. History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir, pp. 129-130

150. The Story of Islamic Imperialism in India, p. 78

151. J.C.Dutt, Kings of Kashmira, Vol. HI, p. 67-68

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153. Baharistan-i-Shahi, (trs. K.N. Pandita), pp. 116-117

154. Ibid

PART II

THE MEDIAEVAL KASHMIRI

MEDIEVAL HISTORY NEEDS A FRESH LOOK...

There are several fallacies in the medieval history of Kashmir as it is currently taught. Some of these are:

- *Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani did not come to propagate Islam in Kashmir. He was in fact a fugitive, trying to escape Timur's wrath.*
- *Shamsu'd-Din Araki was also not a missionary. He was an emissary sent to bring back some medicinal herbs. He propagated the Shia and not the Sunni faith.*
- *Nund Rishi was not a rishi or saint. He was a standard bearer for proselytisation, who was sought to be glamourized by being linked to Lalleshwari.*
- *Kashmiri Sufis were musclemen who fought pitched battles for converting the local Hindus to Islam. They cannot be compared to Iranian or Indian Sufis.*

The concept of Kashmiriyat was cleverly coined by the pseudo- intellectuals of the National Conference and some leftists, who wished to portray Sheikh Abdullah as a protector of Kashmiri Pandits. The recent near-complete ethnic cleansing of the Kashmir valley has exposed the true face of Kashmiriyat.

CHAPTER 5

SOME FALLACIES OF MEDIAEVAL KASHMIR HISTORY

K. N. Pandita

INTRODUCTION OF AUTHOR

Born in Baramulla,Kashmir, Kashinath Pandita earned his Master's degree from Punjab University and Ph.D in Iranian from Teheran University. Teaching and researching first in the Department of Persian and later at the Centre of Central Asian Studies of Kashmir University, Dr. Pandita rose to be the Director of the Institute before he retired in 1987. He was Emeritus Professor, first of the University Grants Commission and later of the Indian Council of Historical Research.

Among his notable works are Iran and Central Asia, Ladakh, Life and Culture(ed), Avicenna-An Introduction, *and* Baharistan-i-Shahi, A Chronicle of Medieval Kashmir. *His travelogue My Tajik Friends won him the Sovietland Nehru Award in 1987. The President of India awarded him for his services to classical literature and the J&K Cultural Academy awarded him for his research work on Hafiz of Shiraz.*

PREFATORY

After the advent of Islam in Kashmir around A.D. 1342, Farsi gradually replaced Sanskrit/Sharada as the language and script used at the royal court. The class of Hindu literati that was born and brought up in the lap of centuries old Hindu traditions but became a victim of forced conversion to Islamic faith was trapped in a period of civilizational transition. Destiny wanted them to be the pioneers in transitioning Sanskrit to Farsi as the court language. Even as converted Muslims, it fell to their lot to dilute the millennia old Hindu tradition in the chemistry of a non-indigenous and un-acclimatized culture. Therefore, if mediaeval Kashmirian historians, writing in Farsi, focused their attention more on kings, courts, nobles and feudal lords, and gave little insight into the affairs of the ordinary people, they did so under the impact of the tradition laid down by Kalhana and his predecessors in part. In addition, the Iranian tradition of historiography, which our mediaeval historians could not ignore as a model, also influenced their style.

The actual number of the histories of mediaeval Kashmir, generally written in Farsi, cannot be computed because of absence of a notice of the works lost to us in the course of vicissitudes of time and vagaries of human nature. However, a record of extant Farsi histories preserved in the Research and Publications Department of J&K State lists as many as seventeen works in manuscript form. The earliest among these, namely *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* by Sayyid Ali bin Sayyid Muhammad was written in A.D. 1579, six years *before* the occupation of Kashmir by Emperor Akbar, and the most recent one in line is *Tarikh-i-Kabir* by Ghulam Mohiuddin written in A.D. 1900. Apart from these, there are several works in the form of diaries, travelogues and stray writings of considerable historical content not included in the list of exclusive histories. For any genuine and competent researcher in Kashmir's mediaeval history, these monographs do occasionally give an insight into Kashmirian affairs of those days. Of the seventeen histories already known to scholars, two have been published so far. These are *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* by Muhammad Azam Dedamari and the volumes of Tarikh-i-Kashmir by Pir Ghulam Hasan Shah of Khuihama (Bandipore). In AD. 1987 a local scholar published *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, compiled in A.D 1622, as a supplement to a long eulogy of the author's now deceased patron and benefactor in Budgam.

This writer published the annotated English translation of this work in A.D. 1991 from Calcutta. I am informed that Haidar Malik Chadora's history, generally known as *Tarikh-i- Haider Malik* (THM) has also been translated into English. The *Gulab Nama* authored by Dewan Kripa Ram has also been published with an English translation. But since it is a biography or a history of the achievements of Maharaja Gulab Singh (1846 - 1852), the founder of Dogra ruling house of J&K (1846 - 1947), it falls outside the scope of our study. We are concerned with the Farsi historical works produced in Kashmir from the first quarter of the 14th century to the later half of the 18th century filling nearly five centuries of Muslim rule over Kashmir.

Before we proceed to examine some of the fallacies of the histories of this period, it needs to be mentioned that according to Jonaraja, Sultan Zainu'l-'Abidin (Bud Shah) had got Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* translated into Farsi by some scholar at his court[1]. Emperor Akbar's minister and court historian Abul Fazl corroborates this statement in his *Ain-e-Akbari*. In his exhaustively annotated English translation of Rajatarangini, M.A. Stein considers the chapter on Kashmir in *Ain-e-Akbari*, of considerable historical value[2]. Whether Abul Fazl had been able to lay his hands on the Farsi version of Rajatarangini or not, remains a debatable question. Several mediaeval Farsi historians of Kashmir had, undoubtedly, used the Farsi version of Rajatarangini produced during the times of Zainu'l-'Abidin (Bud Shah, A.D. 1414 - 1473). They had adopted the Kashmirian connotation of *Razehtarang*.

From this notice we may infer that thematically these Farsi historians could not fully escape the influence of the model presented by Kalhana (and his followers in line viz. Jonaraja, Shrivara, Shuka and Prajabhatta) notwithstanding the immense impact of the art and philosophy of historiography that had developed in Iran. However, Iranian influence on the style of Kashmirian historiography in mediaeval times is more prominent than that of Rajatarangini.

A CRITIQUE

Our study in criticism encompasses a little more than five centuries, viz. A.D. 1342 to 1827. This was the period of Muslim rule in Kashmir. The first two ruling houses, the Shahmiris[3] and the

Baihaqis,[4] both were originally non-Kashmiris. The Chaks,[5] who followed Baihaqis were originally the highlanders from Drav[6] or North Kashmir. And the last of the Muslim rulers were Afghans, again the outsiders. Many Islamic missionaries from Iran and Central Asia came to Kashmir during the Muslim rule. But two of them, who came between the 14th and 16th centuries, were the most outstanding and important of them all. They were Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani[7] of Hamadan[8] in western Iran and Mir Shamsu'd-Din Araki of Arak[9] in Iran. The provinces of Hamadan and Arak of Iran were somewhat contiguous in the days when these two missionaries rose in that land.

Contrary to what historians have stated, it has to be understood that neither of the two actually undertook a long and arduous journey to Kashmir with the definite mission of propagating Islamic faith. Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani was a prominent Sayyid in Hamadan region where he had been given a high status as a learned man in Islamic religion in his locality. A trend among the more prominent men of religious learning and of scholarship in ethnic Aryan lands of ancient Sogdiana, Tukhara, Sandhara and Sapta Sindhu (Turan, Iran, Khurasan, trans-Caspia, and Kapisa or Afghanistan and later on Northern India) overrun by the Arabs in course of history, was to append the term 'Sayyid' to their names. It was to give social respectability to their house and progeny in a new civilizational configuration. Historians further reinforced this innovative practice by asserting that the house(s) had descended from the line of the holy Prophet of Islam. Thus emerged the vast groups of the *Saadaat* (plural of Sayyid) who now were to be found almost in all Islamic countries including Kashmir where Hindus had been converted to a new religio-social formulation on a mass scale. But at the same time, the Sayyids coming to Kashmir from outside, invariably considered themselves at a higher social rung in comparison to the local Sayyids because they always suspected the validity of their genealogical table. Interestingly, Iranian and Central Asian families and men of considerable social status and respectabiiity did not only adopt the title of 'Sayyid' but retained its local analogue "Mir" (abbreviate of Amir) as well. Hence we have Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani and the like of him. Since the masses of people were illiterate and generally ignorant of the principles and practices of a faith newly brought to them, the few learned men among them wielded enormous respect and influence particularly when they were 'Sayyidised', and thus claimed descent from the house of the holy Prophet.

Mediaeval Iran and Central Asia had been a home to warlords and satraps most of them vying with one another for power, riches, influence and territories. Most of the time they nursed mutual acrimony and rivalry, and indulged in fighting if it came to that pass. Occasionally, they entered into matrimonial relations thus cementing solidarity against an intruding enemy. In any case, these satraps showed regard to the influential Sayyids in order to win their support and patronage. This naturally helped the *Saadaat* create their respective political clouts. These were the people who brought about an amalgam of politics and religion as against the satraps and feudal lords to whom the sword was the final arbiter.

But the history of the Central Asian and Iranian regions has had many astonishing events to offer. Amir Timur Gorkan (Tamerlane or Timur - e -Lang as is known to the oriental historians), held sufis, divines and men of religious leaning in high esteem as is indicated by his historian Mahmud Geeti in *Zafar Nameh.* During his campaign of Shiraz in A.D 1391, Timur is reported to have sought an audience with a reputed contemporary saint and divine Shaykh Zainu'd-Din Tayababadi. He dismounted his horse much ahead of arriving at the doorstep of the Shaykh's hospice and footed the distance to show the saint his regard.

However, notwithstanding this gesture of Timur, some of the historians have, without giving fuller detail, hinted at Timur's annoyance with Mir Sayyid Ali of Hamadan, the Shah-i- Hamadan of Kashmiri Muslim description. Historians of mediaeval Kashmir have, out of timidity and hypocrisy, shed no light on the subject. They have generally said that Sultan Sikandar, the Iconoclast, sent his son, Zainu'l - Abidin to Timur while the latter was camping at Attack on the banks of the Indus. Timur took him almost a hostage and carried him to his capital Samarkand, where the prince had to spend seven years *before* returning to Kashmir. But no mediaeval historian of Kashmir has told us why Timur had virtually launched a manhunt for Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani in Iran, which forced the latter to seek shelter in distant Kashmir valley that remained fortified by high mountains making a passage difficult. They have not told us what Timur might have thought about Sultan Sikandar (The Iconoclast) whose father, Sultan Qutbu'd-Din (A.D. 780/A.D. 1378), had patronized Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani after his flight to Kashmir, while he himself patronized the son of Mir Sayyid, namely Mir Muhammad Hamadani.[10] The point could not have escaped Timur's attention.

We are told that while Timur encamped on the banks of the Indus at Attock, he insisted that the Kashmir ruler should present himself at his court. The question is wherefore did the need arise for Timur to insist on Sikandar's presence in the camp? Why did Sikandar, instead of himself going to Attock, dispatch his young son, Zainu'l-Abidin to Timur's court? Why did Timur take Zainu'l-Abidin to Samarkand almost as a hostage and detained him there for seven long years despite the fact that Sikandar had never *offered* any armed resistance to Timur during his Indian campaign nor showed any defiance of his authority? These questions have remained without an answer.

The fact remains that Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani posed a challenge to the authority and lordship of Timur who was ruthless in uprooting his enemies whether they were men of learning and eminence or not. It means that Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani had assumed political importance, which became the cause of his self - imposed exile from his native land.

In this context, contradictory statements ultimately reveal a fallacy that is sufficiently eloquent. The author of *Baharistan - i-Shahi* writes: " He (Timur) showed love and affection to Sultan Sikandar and sent him a pair of elephants as a gift."[11] Jonaraja says that "the elephants were presented by Timur out of fear of Sultan Sikandar,"[12] and Pir Ghulam Hasan Khuihami writes: "Timur was pleased to be informed at Attock that Sultan Sikandar of Kashmir accepted him as his overlord and would strike coins and read the khutba (homily) in his name.[13] How are we to resolve the doubts and fallacy arising from the statements of these historians in their respective version of one important event of mediaeval history? The fact of the matter is that only Hasan appears to be close to reality when examined in historical perspective. Timur was informed that Sultan Sikandar had been patronizing Sayyid Ali Hamadani's son. He may have threatened him with invasion of Kashmir and waited at Attock for his response, which came directly in accordance with what Hasan tells us. But to ensure that Sikandar behaved in future, Timur demanded his son's (Zainu'l-Abidin) presence in the royal court. That is why the prince had to be carried all the way almost as a hostage to Samarkand where he stayed for seven long years. During that period reports of Sikandar behaving properly must have been brought to him regularly.

We are dealing with Amir Sayyid Ali Hamadani. He, along with his followers, who wanted to escape the wrath of the great conqueror, left their place in Hamadan and took a circuitous route avoiding even a remote detection by Timur's troops and spies. As Timur entered Iranian territory somewhere in Sarakhs region on Iran-Turkmenistan border, Mir Sayyid Ali and his entourage took north-eastern rout along the southern shores of the Caspian, entered into Central Asian territory of present - day Tajikistan, crossed the Oxus and came to Afghanistan. Then moving eastward, he entered the NWFP in Swat and then to Kashmir valley. In Afghanistan, he appears to have come to know that Kashmir was a fully mountain protected valley and gave very little chance to Timur of pursuing him. Once in Kashmir, Mir Sayyid Ali desisted from disclosing the real reason of his arrival in Kashmir. He strictly forbade his followers to divulge the truth that they were fugitives. In stead he projected himself as an Islamic missionary called upon by divine will to spread the message of Islam in Kashmir, the land of infidels. "Sultan Qutbu'd-Din failed to propagate Islam in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of Amir Sayyid Ali Hamadani and as such the latter found himself reluctant to stay on in this land," writes the author of *Baharistan.*[14] Of course, he was a learned man in Islamic religion. Farsi was his mother tongue and he could deliver the goods.

Kashmir had been in great turmoil owing to the court intrigues and uprisings of the Damara chieftains from the closing years of 13th century and, thereafter. Kashmirian Hindu society must have found it a bizarre experience to be introduced to a faith with a social behaviour and life style surprisingly different from its own. The fugitive thus became a missionary, a phenomenon not uncommon in Islamic history.

The second historical personality on whom also we shall focus attention is Shamsu'd-Din Araki. He visited Kashmir for the first time in A.D. 1484. *Tohfatu'l-Ahbab,* which appears to be his authentic biography, tells us that he was specifically sent by Sultan

Husayn Mirza, the ruler of later Timurids in Herat (in today's Afghanistan) to proceed to the regions of Kashmir and Tibet. The purpose was to procure medicinal herbs and elixirs from those lands and bring these back to him. Sultan Husayn had contracted some disease. His physicians had told him that the cure lay in the herbal medicines and elixirs available in those regions.[15] In fact Shamsu'd-Din Araki carried a letter from the Timurid ruler of Herat to Sultan Hasan Shah of Kashmir besides some gifts such as a fur coat studded with precious stones.[16] In Kashmir, Araki declared himself an emissary of Sultan Husayn Mirza, the ruler of Khurasan, and, consequently, received special favours and full protocol from his host. But soon he found that he needed to carry forward the mission of his predecessor, Sayyid Ali Hamadani and propagate the Nurbakhshiyyeh order. Thus from an emissary, he made a shift to become the central figure for propagating Nurbakhshiyyeh ideology, which the converts embraced under coercion.

The fact of the matter is that this Shamsu'd-Din Araki has emphatically stated that Amir Sayyid Ali Hamadani was a great protagonist of the House of Ali. He has called Mir Sayyid Hamadani his spiritual guide and mentor. Tracing the line of his spiritual teachers upwards, Shamsu'd-Din sequentially takes the names of Shah Qasim, Muhammad Nurbakhs, Khwaja Ishaque and Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani. He expresses his profound thanks to *God* Almighty who gave him a guide and preceptor like Sayyid Ali Hamadani.[17]

Mediaeval Kashmir historians have always projected Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani as a Muslim of Sunni and not of Shia or Nurbakhshiyyeh sect. The author of *Tohfatu'l-Ahbab* vividly tells us about Araki's hatred of the Sunnis and his boundless bigotry against the Hindus of Kashmir.[18] In fact, in one full chapter of this work the author describes the demolition of a large number of temples at the hands of Araki and his followers. Other historians have skipped over these important events of mediaeval Kashmir. According to the most of the mediaeval historians, the majority of converts in Kashmir adhered to Sunni Islam. But the question is how come Shams Araki, who came about eighty years after Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, propagated his faith in Kashmir and raised a strong social support structure for his Nurbakhshiyyeh ideology without encountering stiff resistance from the people of Sunni faith? Does it not suggest that Shia faith had already made inroads in

Kashmirian society as early as the beginning of conversion process, and that Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani was instrumental in that campaign? Araki only carried forward the mission of Mir Sayyid Ali. The retaliation with full force came when Mirza Haider Dughlat, the Central Asian adventurer assumed the reins of power in Kashmir in A.H. 939/A.D. 1532)[19] The inference is that Shia faith prevailed in Kashmir during the early days of the advent of Islam. But later on, perhaps because of the Baihaqi Sayyids, Sunni faith replaced it. What Shamsu'd-Din did was to restore the earlier faith of the Shia and now of the Nurbakhshiyyeh sect. He worked tirelessly for it. His *fierce* debates with the Sunni *ulema refect* his aversion of the people of that sect. Giving the reason for the animus that (Sunni) *mullas bore* against him, the author of *Tohfatu'l-Ahbab* gives the following incisive information:

> The real reason for the animosity and rancour of these detestable wretches towards Amir Shamsu'd-Din was that the wives and women of the *mullas of* Kashmir were mostly from the (houses of) infidels and polytheists. They had taken them in marriage and the faith and solidarity, which the women had developed among themselves, overpowered them (their husbands -- the mullas). The manners, traditions and rituals of the people of these lands were intertwined with those of the infidels, idol-worshippers and men of aberration and of rank ignorance. It had become a normal practice in their households. Those who dispensed with the permitted and the prohibited in their families and homes were all infidels and polytheists. The *ulema*, theologians, men of scholarship and erudition of this land had accepted the customs and traditions of the depraved and innovative aberrant people as against the traditions and the path shown by the Holy Prophet of Islam. All Islamic laws and the basic tenets of Islamic faith had been discarded. The commandments of *God* and the Prophet had been set aside. All of them were engrossed in worldly acquisition and kept themselves busy with only transient matters. Marriages of women and girls were performed according to the instructions from the infidels and the polytheists. Routine matters like hosting of feasts for the bride and the groom, their

> since he considered a cow holy, he had flung the cowhide over the holy idols. The Shaykh told him to get converted to Islam and turn away from kufr. He told him to accept Muhammad as the Messenger of God, break the idols and come on to the right path..." (Riishi Nameh), AAulla Bahau'd-Din AAattoo, J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar, 1983, pp. 136 - 49)

The compilers state in the Introduction to the book:

> After coming out of the cave, Shaykh Nuru'd Din addressed the task of guiding the seekers of truth along the right path. The first stepa in this direction was bringing of the powerful saint Bomeh Sadhu into the Iswlamic fold. In the area of Matan, there is a village by the name of Bomzu where a famous Hindu saint lived. The Shaykh proceeded towards him but the Sadhu was pre-informed of his arrival through his spiritual power. He told his disciples not to allow the Shaykh to enter the temple. However, the Shaykh succeeded in entering the temple. He carried a recently butchered cow's hide on his shoulder, which he hurled at the idols. Then a great debate ensued between the two. Finally Bomeh Sadhu was converted and given the name of Baba Bam Sahib. The idols were broken one and all (Rishi Nameh, p. 21)

A spiritualist of Shaivite propensity who behaves despicably with a priest of another faith does not qualify to be called a Rishi meaning a saintly person. Therefore the fallacy of Nund Rishi being a Shaivite and a follower of Laleshwari and then preaching peaceful coexistence among the people in Kashmir is a myth concocted by politically motivated historians of Kashmir who have been distorting the mediaeval history of the land. Nnuru'd-bin, if there ever was one of that description, was one among the fanatical propagators of Islamic faith in Kashmir at a time when the masses of people were coerced into conversion. In all probability, the recent converts to the new faith tried to construct a personality compatible with the spiritual status of great Shaivite apostle Laleshwari who had dominated the entire mental, psychological and spiritual spectrum of Kashmirian masses at that point of time.

I would also like to deal with the title *Alamdaar* appended to the name of Shaykh Nuru;d-Din by the contemporary Kashmirian Muslim intelligentsia. It is a combination of two words, *alam* meaning the standard, and *daar* meaning the bearer. The practice of the Islamic zealotry during the early days of conversion campaign in Kashmir was that whenever a village was converted to the Islamic faith en masse, the leading person in the locality or the head priest of the local temple was ordered (by their tormentors) to take up the green (or black) standard and march at the head of a large contingent of converts. He was told to move to the next village and force the people of that village into conversion. A strong band of musclemen calling themselves sufis and dervishes was part of the converted crowd to be deployed in case of resistance from any quarter. He was called *alamdar.* In the context of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani's departure from Kashmir, the author of *Baharistan* writes:

> Consequently, after a short while, he (Sayyid Ali) left via Baramulla under the pretext of proceeding on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Bearing his standard, Laddi Magray accompanied him up to the banks of Drang. (Baharistan, loc. cit. p. 36. Jonaraja calls him Ladda Margesha and says that by birth he was a non-Brahman Hindu of a high caste. (Jonraja, loc. cit. St. 617 and 617. 5n)

By appending the title of *alamadar* to Shaykh Nuru'd-Din, the local intellectuals among Kashmiri Muslims have, advertently or inadvertently, confirmed his role as a staunch Muslim zealot. Therefore Nund Rishi's claim of having mastered Shaivite philosophy through the instrumentality of Laleshwari stands repudiated. This helps us to draw the conclusion that rishism of the Hindus of Kashmir as a manifestation of Kashmirian quest for divinity-disappeared from Kashmir with the forced conversion of the Hindus. However, a small remnant of the community did try to preserve it at least in some semblance. Also the claim of peaceful coexistence among the people of the old and the new faith during next five centuries stands abundantly falsified. If a stray Hindu scholar and saint held on tenaciously to the tradition of his forefathers, he could do so only in secrecy and not in public. *Baharistan* and *Tohfatau'l-Ahbab* (MS) tell us in great detail about the persecution of the Hindus, their forced conversion to Islam and destruction of their temples, shrines and cultural manifestations. Among the later historians only Pir Ghulam Hasan throws a few hints at these atrocities. The rest of them are silent on the event. It has also to be noted that the mediaeval histories of Kashmir are, by and large, silent about the crucial event of conversion process that had begun around A.D. 1339 and continued till the end of 17th century. The Hindu historians (Jonaraja, Srivara, Shuka and Prajyabhatta) writing during the heyday of the rule of the Sultans of Kashmir, had great constraints in giving those details. One can glean from their records that they did not enjoy the freedom to tell us the story threadbare and in detail. Nevertheless, a few hints thrown here and there do give an insight into the process of forced conversion and attendant persecution.

This then is a big fallacy of mediaeval history of Kashmir, which should induce honest and dispassionate scholars to conduct in-depth research into the annals of those times and re-write the history of Kashmir.

Our attention is drawn towards one more glaring fallacy. We are told of Kashamir Sufism and Rishism. Rishism is entirely and purely indigenous social phenomenon thrown up and supported by the Hindu civilization in Kashmir over several centuries. As already said, it died with the conversion of the Hindu society. As far as Sufism in Kashmir is concerned, let us be very clear that it has very little to do with the Sufism of Iran or Central Asia or even for that matter of India. We may at best call it symbolic. Biographies of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani and of Shamsu'd-Din Araki have made frequent use of the terms *sufiyan wa dervishan* meaning sufis and dervishes in the context of propagation of Islam and Islamic teachings and the conversion of Hindus. The group of the sufis came into sight only after the arrival of the missionaries who concentrated on conversion and propagation of faith and not on spirituality. *Tohfatu'l-Ahbab* repeatedly tells us that whenever Araki decided to demolish a particular temple, he took with him the group *(Jamaaf)* of sufis and dervishes and if there was any resistance to the demolition task, these sufis and dervishes were ordered to use the muscle power. Thus the people who functioned as musclemen for the propagation of faith and destruction and demolition of temples were called sufis. They were trained in that art and they carried arms like bow and arrow, swords and axes and daggers. In truth it was the religious militia deployed for the task of carrying forward the message of Islam. Examine the following passage from *Tohfatu'l-Ahbab*

> Araki organized a brigade of dervishes and sufis with the instructions to move about in towns, villages, habitats and localities (in Kashmir). Wherever they found an idol house or an idol or a trace of idolatry, they were to swoop on it, pull down the temples and eradicate the customs and practices of idolatry. He personally supervised the destruction of the idol houses that were found in the peripheries of the city (of Srinagar). At a few places, he had to fight battles against the heretics.. In such cases, he would consider the opportunity a boon and declare the resisting folks as the people of war meaning the enemy (*Tohfatu'l-Ahbab,* Urdu translation, by Reza Akhund Zadeh, Lahore 1997, pp. 513 et. seq)

Here is another example from the same source:

> Araki dispatched him (a converted commander) along with many dervishes, sufis and disciples to (undertake) the task of destroying the Bomar temple. As the contingent of these disciples passed through Sopor town, the people in Chogul got the wind of its. The dervishes and the sufis encamped on the other side of the stream. The side fighting continued for two days. The villagers withdrew and the group of the sufis overpowered them. A victory was recorded. The sufis crossed the river and pulled down the temple....(Tohfatu'l;-Ahbab), Urdu translation by Reza Akhund Zadeh, Lahore, 1997, pp. 513 et seq.

I would, therefore, suggest our budding historians not to hasten to call Kashmir a land of sufis as it is a glaring fallacy. They should overcome the temptation of equating Kashmir 'Sufism' with that of Iranian or Central Asian Sufism by blindly following biased historians of mediaeval Kashmir.[26]

Let me refer to one more fallacy. A hospice *(khanqah)* in Iran and Central Asia, with residential cells for the Sufis was normally an important seat of spiritual training and excellence for the inmates who had to regulate life according to the strict discipline set forth in the tradition of the place. But this was not the case in Kashmir. A *khanqah* in Kashmir in mediaeval times was essentially a place where the inmates were to be indoctrinated in Islamic religious teaching. They were induced to spread the message of Islam in wider sections of people. The duties of the sufis/dervishes included demolition of temples, conversion of people and · oppression against the apostates. The *khanqahs* were virtual training camps for the musclemen of faith. The following passage from *Tohfatu;l-Ahbab* gives an amusing picture of a khanqah, practically a vast eating place for a crowd of hungry beggars and mendicants set up by Shamsu'd-Din Araki:

> Everyday nearly 3000 seers (600 Irak) of rice were cooked in the kitchen (of the khanqah), all to be served to the sufis and dervishes. Beef and cereals were cooked on alternate days.... Sixty kilograms of flour was consumed every day to serve the sufis and dervishes...About one hundred men were engaged in different chores at this establishment The number of family members of these sufis was three hundred. In addition, he also took care of one hundred orphans. The sufis and the children all lived in a group. There were wooden platters, which they carried one by one to the kitchen and came back after filling these with food and meat. They would eat out of platters outside the door of the kitchen. Lunch and supper were offered. All the children ate two meals a day. The children of the sufis were asked to render service (at the hospice) The number of the Sufis ranged from five hundred to one thousand though at times it would rise above a thousand. All of them were engaged in his service. Some of the sufis brought their wives and children with them. Their children could be young as well as grown up. The number of children in each family could be seven, eight or even ten. According to an estimate, nearly ten thousand persons were connected with this establishment (hospice/khanqah).... (Tohfatu'l-Ahbab, op. cit. p. 354 et. sq)

This reveals that *khanqahs* in mediaeval Kashmir had become somewhat the Islamic version of *agraharas*[27] of Hindu period but with a definite objective of feeding the beggars rather than elevating them spiritually. In the *agrahara* system only the limited number of Brahmans enjoyed the benefits of state munificence but in the case of *khanqahs,*[28] these eating shops benefited general public with free two square meals to carry out socially disruptive activities. Therefore, one should be extremely careful in using the term Sufi loosely in the context of mediaeval history of Kashmir.

I would like to point to another fallacy. On several occasions, Kashmiri Sunni Muslims have demonstrated their inherent aversion of other faiths, the Shia and the. Hindu in Kashmir. Of their treatment of Hindus, we would like to refer the reader to the history of Sultan Sikandar the Iconoclast, Baihaqi Sayyids, Musa Raina, Kaji Chak and Shamsu'd-Din Araki. Of their dislike for the Shias, suffice it to refer to Maulana Sarfi's mission to the court of Emperor Akbar in Sikri beseeching him to send his army to oust the Chak Shia rulers of Kashmir. Strange as it looks, the Kashmiri Sunnis were more or less comfortable with the Baihaqi Sayyids who were of foreign origin but uncomfortable with the Chaks who were of indigenous extraction. And present-day Sunni Muslim population of Kashmir holds Maulana Sarfi in high esteem.

I must reflect briefly on the most talked about concept of Kashmiriyat before I close this presentation. What does Kashmiriyat mean in reality? Every region in this vast country has its specificity. So has Kashmir. But why is it given special emphasis now in post - independence period? There must be a reason. Kashmiriyat is a concept developed in our times by the pseudo -intellectual Muslims of Srinagar who enjoy the patronage of the urban elite in the valley. After the accession of the J&K State to the Indian Union in 1947, the Indian State began projecting Kashmir as a symbol of its so-called secular philosophy. The National Conference regime in the State made the Indian nation believe that while the Punjab and Bengal were faced with barbaric communal clashes in the aftermath of partition of India, Kashmir with 98 per cent Muslim majority maintained communal harmony and protected the miniscule Hindu minority. This is a fallacy that must be rejected and repudiated. Seven hundred thousand Hindus and Sikhs of the part of the State now under illegal occupation of Pakistan suffered the worst type of persecution, pogroms, rape and loot. The then district of Baramulla in Kashmir valley, which was overrun by the tribesmen in October 1947, has recorded the killing of nearly three thousand Sikhs and about a thousand Hindus by a very conservative estimate. Entire Sikh and Hindu population of the district suffered general loot of their property, household goods and belongings. Though only temporarily, yet most of them were forcibly converted to Islamic faith and made to go to the mosques and pray after the Muslim practice. The locals and neighbours were the prime actors in this perfidy. And these were the local Muslims who enforced the Islamic code on their neighbours, friends and compatriots[29]. Where had Sheikh Abdullah's slogan of *Hindu Muslim Sikh ittehad* evaporated in thin air? Was there any truth in NCs claim of having protected the Hindu minority in Kashmir.? Nevertheless, the NC leadership succeeded in misleading the Indian leadership at that point of time. In order to efface the record of five hundred years of persecution of the Hindus in Kashmir, the Srinagar elite in concert with the pseudo-intellectuals hit upon the concept of Kashmiriyat. By it they mean to say that the Muslims of Kashmir had ironed out the angularities of Islamic faith brought to the valley by the foreigners and cast it in the local mould of moderation and fraternal relationship. This fallacy has received forceful support on various levels so much so that the many Indian observers began to accept that Kashmir Islam was really moderate and non-aggressive. In doing so, the so-called liberal left has played a crucial role. Anybody with thorough knowledge of mediaeval history of Kashmir will have no hesitation in refuting these claims. The extirpation of the entire community of three hundred thousand Hindus of Kashmir in 1990 is the culmination of the great game of their ethnic-religious cleansing that had begun nearly six centuries ago. Thus Kashmiriyat in the lexicon of the fanatical Muslims means recognition of Islamic identity of Kashmir with or without the Hindu religious minority.

There are other fallacies also. The ones mentioned here are only a pointer. Researchers in Kashmir history will need to re-think what has been told by earlier historians and then sift the false from the truth.

REFERENCES

1. Mulla Ahmad translated *Rajatarangini*'and *Mahabharata* into Farsi under the orders of Sultan Zainu'l-Abidin. *Tarikh-i-Kashmir,* Pir Ghulam Hasan, 3 vols. Srinagar, 1954, vol. ii, p. 197.

2. See Introduction to Kalhana's *Rajatarangini,* tr. M.A. Stein, Delhi 1900.

3. Shah Mir originally belonged to Swat or Panchgahvara (Panjgabbar) valley. *Baharitan-i-Shahi,* tr. Pandit, K.N., Calcutta, 1991, p. 15 et. al. For Shah Mir's Pandav ancestry, see *Rajatarangini* of Jonraja, tr, Dutt, J.C., New Delhi, 1986, p.62. *Tabaqat-e-Akbari,* Nizamu'd-Din Badakhshi, 3 vols. Tr. Dey. B., Calcutta 1927 - 35., vol. iii, p. 386. Haider Malik says he came to Kashmir as a dervish. *Tarikh-i-Haider Malik (THM),* MS, Research Library, J&K Government, Ace. No. 39, foli. 28^b

4. Baihaq is a small town in the province of Khurasan, Iran. Sayyid Mahmud Baihaqi held the suzerainty over Sabzewar and Mian-do-Ab. After suffering a defeat at the hands of the troops of Timur, Sayyid Mahmud fled to India and came to the court of Sultan Ghiyathu'd-Din Tughlak in New Delhi where he was shown great regard and considerations.. The Sultan's daughter was married to Sayyid Mahmud's nephew Sayyid Hasan and he was granted they *Jagir* of Dankur. Sayyid Mahmud came to Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Sikandar. The Sultan showed him great regard and in due course of time, Sayyid Mahmud became powerful and influential. The Baihaqi Sayyids played very active role in the history of Kashmir. *Baharistan,* op. cit. pp. 39 et al.

5. Chak is the abbreviation of Sanskrit Chakra, the tile of a Darad warrior clan in North Kashmir during the reign of King Jayasimha, A.b. 1128 - 49. The Chaks seem to have retained their pre-Islamic name formulation like Lankar Chak (Alamkarachakra) or Kaji Chak (Kanchan Chakra). Chaks ousted the Baihaqi Sayyids as rulers of Kashmir, and, in turn, were ousted by Akbar. See I, op. cit. pp. 106 et al.

6. Drav could be the Duranda of *Rajatarangini,* which according to Stein is the tract of Kishanganga Valley from below Shardi as far as Karnav. *Rajatarangini,* loc. cit. Book viii, sloka 2707 - 2709 n. For Shardi, see *Rajat.* Vol. II, Note B - i. 37, pp. 279 - 89.

7. He arrived in Kashmir in A.H. 783/A.D. 1381 during the reign of Sultan Qutbu'd-Din though some say he came in A.H. 773/A.D. 1371. *Baharistan* loc. cit.p. 34. He visited Kashmir for the second time in A.H. 781/A.D. 1379. *Tarikh-i-Kashmir,* Pir Ghulam Hasan, vol. 11, p. 175.

8. Hagmatana of Avestic and Pahlavi records. Ecbatana of Greek historian Herodotus.

9. It is incorrect to write Iraqi in stead of Araki as most of our historians do. Arak is a province to the northwest of Iran wheref rom he hailed. This is sufficiently established by several references in Tohfatu'l-Ahbab. Hence the correct version Araki has been adopted in this paper.

10. *Baharaistan,* loc. cit. p. 37.

11. Ibid. p. 38.

12. *Jonraja,* loc. cit. stanza 562.

13. *Tarikh-i- Kashmir,* loc. cit. p. 182

14. *Baharistan,* loc. cit. p. 36.

15. From early days Kashmir was known for a variety of medicinal plants growing on its mountains and in valleys. In particular, saffron and Saussurea Lappa *(Kushtha - Kuth) were* cultivated in abundance. See Lawrence, *Valley of Kashmir,* p. 342, *Rajatarangini* 'vol. ii. p. 365 and fn.73. See also Hiuen Tsiang's notice in *Si-yu-ki, i.* p. 146

16. *Tohfatau'l-Ahbab,* loc. cit. p. 192.

17. Araki exhorted his disciples and followers in Kashmir to continue the recitation of hymns *(awarad-e-fathiyyeh amiriyyeh)* precisely in the manner set forth by Amir Sayyid Ali Hamadani., *Tohfatu'l-Ahbab,* op. cit. p. 287.

18. In the course of struggle for supremacy between Path Shah and Muhammad Shah, in about A.D. 1550, the two sides fought a battle somewhere close to Sopor town. In this context the son-in-law of Shamsu'd-Din Araki deserted the troops of Sultan Path Shah and joined his opponents. At this development, Malik Uthman, the Chief Minister of Path Shah sent the following message to Araki," With God's grace the victory will be ours and on reaching the city (of Srinagar), the first thing for me to do would be to roast you alive, and then enter the city." *Baharistan,* op. cit. p. Ill, *Tohfatu'l-Ahbab* has one full chapter on Araki's brutal campaign of conversion of Hindus to Islamic faith and destruction of their temples, shrines and cultural symbols. *Tohfat.* Chapter iv part iii, pp. 487 - 506 et. al

19. *Baharistan.* op. cit. p. 140. For details of burning of the *khanqah* at Zadibal and desecration of the grave of Araki see *THK,* p. 254.

20. *Tohfatu'l-Ahbab,* loc. cit. pp. 399 et al. According to the author, relations between Araki and Sayyid Muhammad Baihaqi got strained when the former turned down Sayyid Muhammad's solicitation of his daughter's hand in marriage.

21. Curiously, the biographer of Araki is silent on the death and burial site of Araki. However, *Baharistan* mentions Zadibal hospice as the place where Araki's body was buried. Ibid. p. 140.

22. Ibid. Hasan writes that the details of the domination of the followers of Shams Araki and propagation of Shia faith in Kashmir together with a copy of *Ahwat* written by Shams Araki were submitted to Homayun Padshah through Mirza Haidar and Khwaja Hajji Banday. For more information on Hajji Banday, see *Baharistan,* op. cit. p. 141. They requested for reform *(islah)* in religion and also for troops. *THK,* loc. cit. p. 248 Malik Haidar Chadora writes that Malik Abdal Magray and Malik Regi Chak (Kashmiri chiefs) brought Mirza Haidar Kashghari from the court of Homayun. *Taraikh-i-HaidarMalik* Chadoora, loc. cit. foli. 52^b

23. Shah Mir came to Kashmir during the reign of Suh Dev. One of the very remarkable features of the reign of Suh Dev is that during his rule many outsiders came to Kashmir who played a significant role in its future affairs. Suh Dev seems to have been a very tolerant king. This is attested to by Jonaraja. Commenting on his account of Suh Dev (A.D. 1301 - 20), the learned Srikanth Koul writes "it appears from Jonaraja's poetical language that Suhadeva was munificent in providing means of subsistence to outsiders who had entered the valley in search of employment. In fact the outsiders were mercenary recruits, *refugees,* and travellers patronized by the king." *Jonaraja,* loc. cit. p. 62

24. In the course of a story about the hunting expedition of Shihabu'd-Din the son of Sultan Alau'd-Din (A.D. 1347), along with some commanders namely Chander, Udsheh Rawal and Ikhtaji, the author of *Baharistan* writes," Suddenly there appeared a woman from the woods who had signs of austerity and righteousness stamped on her face. She offered a cup of sherbet to Shihabu'd-Din who drank it to dregs. *Baharistan,* loc. cit. p. 30. This is confirmed by Haidar Malik Chadora, *THM* (MS) loc. cit. foli.34b. But Hasan categorically states that she was Lala Arifa, *THK,* loc. cit. p. 171. Jonaraja writes that a circle of yoginis appeared from the forest of Vakpushta. *Jonaraja,* loc. cit. pp. 35 - 6. For fuller information on the site of Vakpushta (or Vakapushtatvi), see R*ajatarangini* ii, fn. 57. Curiously, Stein refers to Jonaraja's *sloka* 343 about Prince Allau'd-Din (Allesvara) adventure with a witch in the Vakpushta

forest. The witch was said to dwell in a *girigahvara*. I am not able to throw any light on it.

25. Temple at Bumzu built by Bhima Shahi. See *Rajatrangini,* ii 165 n.; vi. 177-178 n. II 465.

26. For more information, see *Tarikh-e- Tasawwuf dar Iran* by Dr. Qasimv Ghani, 2 vols. Teheran, 1959.

27. For more information on *agraharas,* see *Kajatarangini,* i, 88, 90, 96 et al.

28. Curiously, the etymology of the Farsi word *khanqah* supports this view. It comprises two syllables *khwan* (pronounced as *khan)* meaning food + *gah* (corrupted to *qah)* meaning place. Hence literally *khanqah* means an eating place. It has its origin in Avestic/ Pahlavi *khwar* + *nak* found in extant works in those ancient languages. Literally *khwarnak* means rather a smallish place for eating. However, with the rise of Sufism in Iran and Central Asia, khanqah assumed great importance as the seat of mystic and spiritualistic training.

29. For a graphic account of the role of local Kashmiris in attacking the Hindus and the Sikhs throughout Baramulla district in the wake of incursion of the tribesmen in Kashmir in October 1947, see my article in *The New Hope,* March - April 2002 published by Kashmir Foundation for Peace and Development Studies, Srinagar.

THE TRUTH ABOUT KASHMIRIYAT...

Whenever Muslims have ruled Kashmir, Kashmiri Pandits have been at the receiving end. Yet the Kashmiri Pandit intellectual tirelessly acclaims the centuries old unity among the Hindus and Muslims, which he calls Kashmiriyat. A greater travesty of truth cannot be imagined.

Kashmiriyat has a modern origin. It started with the British persuading the Maharaja to enunciate a Mulki policy, under which preference would be given to locals in the recruitment to government service.

The British never reconciled themselves to the ceding of Kashmir to the Maharaja after the Treaty of Amritsar. When all other strategies failed, they encouraged the Kashmiri Muslims to rise against the Maharaja.

The National Conference had an outer faade of communal harmony, but at the heart of the party's ideology was the unstated plan to establish the Nizam-e-Mustafa, with Kashmiri Muslims usurping all the power. That is why Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, was recognized as the official language of the State, although no one speaks it. 70% of all seats in educational and professional institutions were reserved for Kashmiri Muslims.

Even the call for autonomy is a ruse to create an Islamic state. The history of Islam is that of monarchies and dictatorships. Islam does not brook democracy.

Kasmiriyat is thus a myth being spread as a smokescreen for ushering in Islamic rule on the sly.

CHATPER 6

KASHMIRIYAT - A COUNTER POINT

A.K. Kaul

INTRODUCTION OF AUTHOR

Shri Avtar Krishen Kaul was born in Srinagar in October 1936. He graduated from the Kashmir University in 1956. After a brief stint with J&K Police, he joined the Intelligence Bureau, Government of India in 1957. He saw active service in the Sino-Indian War (1962), Mass Pak Infiltration into J&K (1965) and Indo-Pak War (1971). He was awarded for commendable services performed during these events.

Shri Kaul was the Vice-President of the Kashmir Samiti Delhi (1986). He was Editor-in-Chief of Koshur Samachar during the period 1988-92 and has taken over the assignment again from June 2002.

He has written for many publications, particularly on Kashmir-related subjects. He has made a deep study of the history of Kashmir.

OF MODERN ORIGIN

Kashmiriyat is an amorphous term which has meant different things to different people. Definitely of modern origin, *Kashmiryat's* first appearance as a sentiment can be traced back to 1889. Following the British Government's clipping of Maharaja Partap Singh's powers a council of Regency, with the Maharaja's younger brother, Amar Singh, as its President, was set up to rule the state. One of the first *'firmans'* issued by the Council was to change the court language from Persian to Urdu. This caused understandable upheaval in the existing state officials who had little knowledge of Urdu. This *'firman'* particularly affected the Muslim employees who generally occupied lower posts although it cannot be denied that it was a big blow to the Hindu employees as well. As the majority of the Council of Regency constituted of members hailing from the Punjab, a move was set afoot to induct Punjabi officials (who knew Urdu) into the State administration. This led to many of the locals being thrown out of job leading to great resentment. This event is remniscent of a similar move made by Zain-ul-Abidin, Badshah, during his regime to change the court language from Sanskrit to Persian. Badshah's move, however, was basically aimed at neutralizing the grip of Kashmiri Pandits on the local administration. Pandits, whom he had recalled from exile following his father (Sikandar's) atrocities on them, were used by him to update the state official records and, at the same time, train prospective Muslim officials who did not know Sanskrit. Having accomplished that Badshah lost no time in switching over to Persian as court language.

The change of court language added to the miseries of the already miserable Kashmiris and great resentment was brewing, What was worse was that rules were framed to hold competitive examinations for appointment to state service. The rules were very stiff since no Kashmiri was even a matriculate then. Punjabis were, thus, imported in large numbers. In the meantime, the State Government established schools imparting education in Urdu and English. Christian Missionaries also set up a Mission School in 1891. With the passage of time and increase in the number of young men educated in schools teaching English, greater awareness grew of the fact that Punjab officials had usurped all positions of vantage in the administration of the State. Two colleges, one at Srinagar (1905) and one in Jammu, (1908) were also established, in the meantime. Schools turned out a large number of matriculates every year who clamoured for government jobs, as there were no other avenues of employment. Courage was picked to petition the Council of Regency as also the British Central Government seeking reservation of state jobs for the locals. Maharaja Partap Singh is reported to have supported such pleadings. The British authorities reportedly issued instructions that *'Mulkis'* (locals) should be preferred to outsiders. The instructions were deliberately left vague with the result that those whose relations were in government service got themselves declared as *"Mulkis"*. The first definition of a State Subject came in 1912 but it too left many loopholes and the influx of outsiders continued unabated.

Interestingly, the agitation for State subjecthood was led by Kashmiri Pandits, whose main occupation was government service. Intact, it was the Pandits, particularly, who took to the new educational courses and very soon came up to the required standards of recruitment in government service. The Muslims, however, continued to be backward and no conscious effort was taken by the State or the community itself to encourage them to learn even the three R's. Finally, the State made proper rules for State Subjecthood which are relevant even today,

It can safely be said that the agitation for *"Mulki"* status and the consequent 'State Subject" law have sown the seeds of the concept of *Kashmiryat.* These events helped in the evolution of a commonality of approach between the Muslims and Hindus in Kashmir. The 'State Subject' law is still in force in J&K and is the main basis for the inclusion of Article 370 in the Indian Constitution. Under the law of 'State Subject' no person, who is not a state subject, can own or purchase any immovable property or get permanent government job in J&K State. Further, non-state subjects cannot vote for the State Assembly elections though they have been allowed to vote for the Lok Sabha elections.

THE BRITISH INTRIGUE

A slight digression here is necessary. After handing over Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh under the Treaty of Amritsar (1846), The British had achieved their first objective of weakening the Lahore Government and consolidating its position in Delhi. Gulab Singh had already ingratiated himself into the British confidence by actively cooperating with them during the lifting of the siege of the British garrison at Jalalbad in Afghanistan. He rendered valuable services to the expedition. Obviously, the Maharaja had visualized the early break up of the Sikh State in Lahore, and its annexation by the British and went on to secure

British help in acquiring an independent status for his newly formed Jammu State. He was active in negotiating on behalf of the Lahore Government with the British the Treaty of Lahore (March 9, 1846). He succeeded in including in that Treaty the following clause, "*In consideration of the services rendered by Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu to the Lahore State towards procuring the restoration of the relations of amity between Lahore and British Governments, the Maharaja (of Punjab) hereby agrees to recognise the independent sovereignty of Raja Gulab Singh in such territories and districts in the hills as may be made over to the said Raja Gulab Singh by separate agreement between himself and the British Government.....and the British Government, in consideration of the good conduct of Raja Gulab Singh also agrees to recognise his independence.....*" Within a week of the Treaty of Lahore the Treaty of Amritsar (March 16,1846) was signed. Having secured their position with regard to the Punjab (Lahore) Government after considerably weakening it, the British seem to have entertained doubts about having given up Kashmir, Wrote Sir Francis Younghusband, "*surprise has often been expressed that when this lovely land had actually been ceded to us, after a hard and strenuous campaign, we should ever have parted with it for the paltry sum of three-quarters of a million sterling.*" This, thus set off the British conspiracy to undo the 'Treaty of Amritsar.'

Within two months of the Amritsar Treaty, Lord Hardinge visited the valley. On his return he wrote to the Maharaja stating that the nature of his internal administration aroused misgivings in the mind of the British Government and claiming the right on the part of the Company (East India Company) to interfere in his affairs. Pressure was consistently brought on Gulab Singh and his successors to allow posting of a Resident. Many moves were made including goading the Muslim majority of the State to rise in protest. The death of Ranbir Singh and the accession of Partap Singh in 1885, provided the British the opportunity to post a Resident in Srinagar. The British Government justified this move "*as a measure which may be called for, not merely by the need for assisting and supervising administrative reforms, but also by the increasing importance to the Government of India of watching events beyond the North West frontiers of Kashmir.*" Intact, efforts were made by the Imperial Government in Calcutta and political parties in England to bring pressure on the Maharaja to "*allow Europeans to acquire* *and own land in Kashmir"*. The purpose was to turn the Valley into a colony for British retired officers to settle in. This was effectively resisted by the Maharaja.

With the British Resident in place, mischief to undermine the existence of the Maharaja was set afoot with greater vigour. While the Muslim press in the Punjab was allowed to let loose an extensive and fierce propaganda against the Maharaja, the British, aware of Partap Singh having no male heir of his own, actively cultivated his brother whose son, Hari Singh, was slated to ascend the 'gaddi'. Amar Singh, it many be recalled, had been made the chairman of the Council of Regency (1889) as a move short of deposing Partap Singh. Amar Singh, however, predeceased Partap Singh in 1909. The British then took a keen interest in the education and upbringing of Hari Singh, One Major H.K. Kerr was appointed his guardian. Somehow, Maharaja Hari Singh, who ascended the throne in 1925, did not prove to be that pliable. His observations at the London Round Table Conference that *"As Indians and loyal to the land whence we derive our birth and infant nurture, we stand as solidly as the rest of our countrymen for our land; enjoyment of a position of honour and equality in the British commonwealth of Nations"*. This proved the last nail in the British coffin.

SPREAD OF COMMUNAL VIRUS

Another story, though apocryphal, merits reiteration. Maharaja Hari Singh, was childless till 1931, although he had married twice. The British had, for such eventualities, promulgated the "Doctrine of Lapse" according to which the administration of a state could be taken over by the British Government if the ruler of the state had no made heir of his own. However, with the birth of Karan Singh in 1931, the British expectations were put paid. They now adopted new strategems. A certain well known singer is reported to have been bribed into poisoning Hari Singh. While on a boat in the famous Dal lake the singer is believed to have mixed some poison in his drinks. Hari Singh was lucky to survive the attempt on his life. He is reported to have vomitted the poison as his body rejected it. This discovery led to the banishing of the singer from Kashmir. This strategem having failed, the conspirators embarked on a new initiative. A search was launched for a popular and well placed Muslim who could build up Muslim opposition to the Hindu

Maharaja. It is believed that one of the persons approached was G.A. Ashai, who was Asstt. Inspector of Schools. Ashai was a well known local Muslim but he lacked leadership qualities, was not a good speaker, and suffered a physical handicap. He was lame in one leg. Ashai, though very influential and in constant touch with freshly educated Muslim Youth, was acutely aware of his own weaknesses. He suggested the name of a young Mushlim who had done his M.Sc. Chemistry from Aligarh, as the right person British were looking for. The name of the young man was Shiekh Mohamad Abdullah. He had been given the job of a school teacher although he had applied for a college lecturer.

Sheikh Abdullah had joined the *"Reading Room Party"*, a group of disgruntled educated Muslim youth, after resigning his teacher's job. He had a sonorous voice which endeared him to the people, He addressed mammoth meetings of Muslims in various mosques. The atmosphere became surcharged with communal tension, and it needed only a spark for it to explode. Sometime during this period the British are reported to have contacted Sheikh Abdullah. Marriage of Begum Akbar Jahan to Sheikh Abdulla was believed to have been a part of a package deal with him. The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference came into existence in October 1932 with Sheikh Abdullah as its first president, Mir Waiz Yousuf Shah, who was the leader of a large group of Muslims, did not see eye to eye with Sheikh Abdullah and came out of the Muslim Conference along with his followers,

The history of conversion of Muslim Conference to National Conference (1939) is too well known to be repeated here. The fact, however, remains that following the 13th July 1931 riots sparked by police firing on a rampaging Muslim crowd, communal tensions heightened. Bands of Muslim goons took out their resentment against the government and the police on the peaceful and innocent Hindus. They unleashed mass fury against the Hindus, killing some of them and looting and vandalising their property, particularly in Maharajgunj area of Srinagar city. Ironically, July 13 is being observed as Martyr's Day in Kashmir. No mention is made of the Hindus who were killed on that day or whose property was vandalised. That much for *Kashmiriyat.*

ISLAM IN DANGER

A section of the fundamentalist Muslims, called Ahrars, in the Punjab, had formed an organisation by the name of Kashmir Muslim Conference of Lahore. This organisation came later to be called All India Kashmir Committee. This organisation carried out an extensive propaganda campaign against the 'Hindu Maharaja' in particular and against the Hindus in general. Leaflets and journals containing stories of oppression of Kashmiri Muslims by the Maharaja and his Hindu officers and instigating them to rise in revolt, were widely circulated. Interestingly, the first visible impact of this propaganda was witnessed in Jammu city and adjoining villages in 1931. A few incidents pertaining to the reading of the "Khutba' in a local mosque and alleged disrespect shown to the Holy Quran by a Police constable led to an agitation in which the cry of *"Islam in danger"* was raised with great vehemence. Through the Muslim educated youth were ostensibly raising their voice against unemployment yet the fact that thousands of educated Kashmiri Pandit educated youth were also facing acute unemployment, was totally ignored and undermined. The agitation took definite communal overtones. It became a Muslim movement against the Hindu Maharaja. Kashmiri Pandits came to be viewed with suspicion. The fact that the KPs had taken to English education in right earnest and had thus qualified to be recruited in government offices, at least some of them, had been further held against them.

The coming into being of the National Conference in 1939, provided a sense of relief to the Kashmiri Pandits, They were taken in by its secular professions and whole heartedly joined in the National Conference movement, Pandits like Prem Nath Bazaz, Shyam Lal Saraf, J.L Kilam, Kashyap Bandhu and D.P. Dhar, played prominent role in National Conference activities. The National Conference also adopted in 1944 a progressive document called *"Naya Kashmir'*. The document upheld *"the democratic principle of responsible government with the elective principle applied from the local panchayat upto the legislative assembly"*. Interestingly, the 'Naya Kashmir' doctrine had talked of reservation of two seats for Kashmiri Pandits in the State legislature. Kashmiri Pandits, naturally, looked at National Conference with great hope and expectation. So much so that the All J&K Kashmiri Pandit situation has now dramatically changed. Very few of our youth now opt for government jobs. These young men and women have come to shine in their professions. They have no intention to go to Kashmir because they are aware that their prospects there are bleak.

Sheikh Abdullah has in his autobiography *"Aatesh-e-Chinar"*, at one place, described Kashmiri Pandits as spies for India. He was, obviously, irked by their intense patriotism and their urge to see India emerge as a great country. Reverting back to the term *'Kashmiryat'*, it is clear that it was used as a ruse to prop-up Kashmiri Islamiat. *'Kashmiryat'*, to an ordinary person, should mean a common geography, a common history, a common language and mutual respect for each others' customs and traditions One of the greatest casualties of this concept has been the language. Urdu has been adopted as the official language when it is not the mother tongue of any section of the population in the J&K State. Rightly or wrongly Urdu has come to be identified with Islam in the sub-continent and hence Kashmiri Muslims had to identify themselves with it. Surprisingly, it has been reported that, lately, Muslims in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnata and other southern areas have started declaring Urdu as their mother tongue. Ironically Kashmiri is included in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India. An unseemly controversy whether Kashmiri should be written in Devnagri or Persian script has been allowed to fester so that it does not have a script at all. Officially the Government of J&K is committed to Persian script. The Devnagri script to them is a Hindu script and hence to be rejected.

GREATER AUTONOMY

Upholders of real Kashmiryat should not have objected to Kashmiri Pandits occupying a few important positions in the Administration. But this is being done day in and day out although, by definition, Pandits should have been an intrinsic part of *Kashmiryat.* There have been persistent demands for establishing "Nizam-e-Mustafa", an enpheumism for Islamic rule. The attempt is to create an Islamic republic within India and pull Kashmir out of the ambit of either the Constitution of India or even the J&K Constitution. One fails to understand how such a move could even be remotely related to the concept of *Kashmiryat.* Pseudo-secularists in our country have been alleging that Kashmiris (read

Kashmiri Muslims, Kashmiri Hindu don't exist for them) have been alienated and that something needs to be done to remove this alienation. One of the main suggestions offered is to grant greater autonomy to Kashmir. The Farooq Abdullah Government got a resolution adopted by the State legislature in June 2000 demanding greater autonomy for J&K by returning to pre-1952 position (when Delhi Agreement was signed). This proposal was summarily rejected by the Central Government. It is necessary to recall here some of the important developments in the J&K State since it acceded to India and examine how, if at all, have these eroded the autonomy of the State:-

(a) Per capita expenditure in J&K has been more then ten times say either in Bihar or West Bengal.

(b) Per capita allotment of plan funds is at least four times that of Modhya Pradesh.

(c) There has been a phenomenal increase in the number of mosques constructed since 1947. There has been similar expansion of Islamic Madrasas and other Muslim institutions. J&K. Auqaf-e-Islamia has consistently received State patronage. It has come to be a very prosperous and, therefore, influential institution.

(d) On the other hand, there has been a distinct decrease in the number of Hindu religious places. State Administration have provided active support to Muslim groups who have embarked on encroachment of Hindu religious places like, Mattan, Gautam Nag, Loke Bhavan, Noor Bagh etc.etc.

(e) Matinee shows in local cinemas have been stopped on Fridays to enable Muslims to offer their Friday prayers.

(f) Urdu is the official language of the State when it is not the mother tongue of any section of the population, Ironically, Urdu is the official language of Pakistan.

(g) In higher educational and professional institutions,Kashmiri Muslims are assured of 70% reservation.

(h) There has been almost total ethnic cleansing of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley.

DEMOCRACY A SMOKESCREEN

Voices have also been raised against what is called denial of democracy to Kashmiries, There is some element of truth in that. But instead of raising a concerted voice against that, unleashing a terrorist onslaught cannot be a justified. It has worsened the situation. These fundamentalist elements have, in the bargain, brutally trampled upon the rights of the Hindu minority, almost extirpating them, A hue and cry is raised about the violation of human rights of Kashmiri Muslims but not a word is mentioned about Kashmiri Pandits who have been pushed out of their homes and hearths and continue to be so even after more than thirteen years. Establishment of Nizam-e-Mustafa cannot, in any manner, be a substitute for a vibrant and vigilant democracy. With all its tall claims Islam cannot usher a true democracy. Islam's history is a witness to that. One of the main assertions of Muslims is that government belongs to God. The people cannot exercise their free will and enjoy the freedom to choose and refuse. Except one. Abu Baker, all the four Caliphs who succeded Prophet Mohammad (PBH) were killed in internecine war. That much for democracy. Later the Islamic rule became a dynastic rule or kingship. A cursory look at the Islamic world would clearly suggest that democracy is not one of its fortes. The Kashmiri Pandit mindset is unfortunately frozen. Take any KP writer or speaker on such varied subjects as poetry, prose, culture, history or politics the common refrain is that there has been peace and harmony in Kashmir for hundreds of year. Can a greater travesty of history be imagined? History is witness to the fact that whenever Muslims have been in power including after 1947 the Pandits have been at the receiving end. Does it all suggest that there was *"centuries old unity and solidarity of Kashmiries"?* Is that *Kashmiryat?* It is a myth that is being spread as a smokescreen for ushering Islamic rule on the sly.

CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude by giving details of a discussion I had recently with an octogenarian Pandit Saheb. He was very nostalgic about Kashmir. The broader political implications of Kashmiryat did not interest him but he was full of anecdotes that suggest to him that there was something like a Kashmiri feeling. To him Kashmiryat meant many things. Some of these were: A Muslim neighbour's, wife suckling a Hindu baby because its own mother is unable to do so. Muslim and KP women singing and dancing 'rouf at the marriage of each others' children, The 'Haak' of Kawdara and the Nadru of Dal Lake, Both communities tying wish threads on the railings of shrines. Muslims refraining from taking meat during Batamol and Rishi Saheb urs. KP children taking a boat ride on the Jehlum in return for 'Shivratri' walnuts. Maliks (Muslims) receiving a share of the offerings at Amar Nath cave because it was their ancestors who had discovered the holy cave. The vendor selling ice in summer with the lilting tune of "Kam-e-vana-volmak-yakho." The Nadir Monja of Tarak Halwoi and the 'Pambuchh' sold at Kathi Darwaza of Hari Parbat. The Muslim milkman presenting 'Dahi toor' to his KP client at Shivratri. Pandits vying with each other to wish Id Mubarak to their neighbours. Both KP and Muslim elders did not eat anything in the house of the in-laws of each others' daughter, Both throwing open their houses for performing marriage ceremonies of each others' children. While describing all these the reverened Pandit's eyes got moistened. He, however, ended on a bitter note. At one time, he said, the atmosphere resounded with slogans like "Sheri-Kashmir Ka Kya Irshad, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh ittehad but lately it is "we want Pakistan without Battas (KPs) but with Bhattnis (KP women)". He clearly remembered that in earlier days when tonga harked a KP women he would shout "Hatbi Razabai" but now he shouts "Batni Batni dodai muss". Muslim children are often heard to say." Sheri-Kashmir Ka Kya Irshad, Battan, Sikhan Zaharbad".

KASHMIRI CULTURE WILL SURVIVE...

With the advent of Islam, a peculiar situation developed in Kashmir. Members of all castes except the Brahmins converted to Islam. But the Brahmins did not quite lose the position that they owed to their intelligence, high standard of education, proficiency in language etc. The Sufis, the Rishis and the Shaivites spoke a common mystic language, where it was difficult to distinguish a Hindu from a Muslim.

This led to the emergence of kashmiriyat, which signified a common Kashmiri culture that encompassed the whole gamut of intra- and inter-community relationships, activities and achievements within Kashmiri society.

Kashmiri Pandits should preserve their language and culture wherever they go and continue to pursue the goal of excellence in whatever they do. Kashmiri culture will survive till the last Kashmiri survives.

CHATPER 7

KASHMIRIYAT: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL VIEW POINT

T. N. Pandit

In India as also in the other countries in the subcontinent, if one visits a village, the one question that is very pointedly asked is about one's identity in terms of one's caste/jati. The other information about one's religion, region, and mother-tongue etc., though important by itself, comes only next and revolves round the basic fact of one's caste-identity. Unless the latter identity is established in a manner that is locally understood (in terms of local caste categories with reference to their traditional occupations etc.) the villagers will not be able to place a stranger anywhere socially i.e as a member of a social group. Even in an urban setting the preliminary assessment of a new colleague, neighbour or an acquaintance is made only in terms of the stereotypes that exist in the region about various caste, religious and regional categories. But again, more often than not, the caste identity remains the most important factor at this stage and may be even later.

The reasons are simple. Throughout the length and breadth of the Indian subcontinent, for millennia, the dominant society has been caste-based. The castes (in reality sub-castes/jatis) have been occupational groups, each with a different social status, within a hierarchically organised system. These jati clusters, in the traditional village economy, provide a mechanism for the exchange of goods and in terms of what services been sometimes called the jajmani relationships. There are and have been some local variations with respect to the character and composition of these jati-clusters in different parts of the country because of local, historical, ecological and cultural factors. But one factor has been universally common i.e. that in these jati- hierarchies the Brahmins have almost always been on top and the jatis following "Iower"occupations/ bring up the tail. In between there are a whole lot of jatis with varying degrees of social distance from the top and the bottom positions.

In this stratified system there is implied a hierarchy of status, power and prestige. If we put the question of hierarchy aside for a while, we could look at the picture in another way. That Indian society is a segmentary system is quite obvious as each jati is a segment (part) of the larger whole (society). The interaction between the segments is based on a high degree of interdependence and presumably a state of mutual benefit. Together they constitute an organic whole in the broadest sense. Since they all function under the umbrella of a common culture, these jatis exist and can be observed as social entities/communities with reference to each other. In other words, the whole, in all its facets, provides the context for each part.

KASHMIR: THIS HLSTORICAL BACKGROUND

The above explanation is necessary to understand the social-cultural situation in Kashmir Valley as it has evolved and developed over the millennia. Though politically Kashmir has only periodically been part of the subcontinental empires and kingdoms having been an independent/autonomous state for longish stretches of time; culturally and socially it has all along been an integral part of the great Indian civilisation. In fact, Kashmiri scholars, writers and poets have made highly significant contributions to classical Sanskrit literature and religious thought. There has been considerable interaction between Kashmiri scholars and the scholars in other parts of India. The Vir/Saivism school of philosophy for example, as an offshoot of the Saivist thought and phillosophy developed in

Kashmir, flourished in South India over the past centuries and, in due course, achieved an identity of its own. Kashmir also achieved fame as a great centre of Mahayana Buddhism and Buddhist thought. In fact Buddhism was introduced in Kashmir by Emperor Ashoka (273 -232B.C.) himself, who brought 5000 monks for permanent settlement here and eventually made a gift of the valley to the Sangha for propagation of Buddhism (Bamzai 1994:71). However, the growth and development of Buddhism in Kashmir reached its pinnacle about three centuries later under the rule of the Kushans especially the great Kanshtka (1st century A.D.) who held the third Buddist council (international conference) in Kashmir (ibid:83). The philosophic literature of Mahayana Buddhism bears a deep impress of Kashmir Saivism (ibid:75). Buddhism under Kushans became the State religion and Kashmiri missionaries carried its message to Tibet,China & South Central Asia.

However, during the rule of the cruel Hun king Mihir-Kula (515-550 A.D) Buddhism received a set-back in Kashmir. But during the reign of the Karkota dynasty which ruled Kashmir during the 7th and 8 centuries, Buddhism and Hinduism prospered side by side with royal patronage. The most outstanding king of this dynasty was Lalitaditya (724 to 761 A.D.). He was a great conqueror and warrior and is said to have extended his rule to large areas in North-Western and Central India, Ladakh and Tibet region and made several forays into central Asia. Apart from war and conquest he was a very able and just administrator and also a great architect. The world famous Martand temple was build by him. He had made diplomatic contacts even with the Chinese Emperor named Yuen Tsun. According to historian RC.Majumdar (Ancient India:383) the Kingdom of Kashmir during Lalitadityas rule, became the most powerful empire India had been after the Gupta Empire. By all accounts, Lalitaditya ranks among the greatest Indian Kings of all time. Through his conquests, elements of Kashmiri culture, literature, religious ideas and arts and crafts spread to a wide area. In return, many elements and ideas of distant cultures and societies reached Kashmir and enriched its culture.

Karkota dynasty was followed by Utpala kings of whom Avantivaman (855-883 A.D) was the most outstanding. His benign rule brought to Kashmir 28 years of peace, all round prosperity and development. He built the town of Avantipur and the two great temples there (ruins are still there).

Queen Didda of the Gupta dynasty held sway over Kashmir for half a century (950-1003 A.D.) Lohara dynasty ruled Kashmir during the eleventh century. This was the time when Mahmud Ghazni was making his repeated forays in North Western India and plundering the people, their wealth and their temples. However, he did not enter Kashmir but touched only its borders (early decades of 11th century). The rule of the last Lohara king Harsa (1089-1101 A.D.) was noteworthy for his evil deeds of plundering the Hindu temples all over Kashmir, desecrating the idols in most vulgar ways and melting them up to obtain copper, silver and gold for making coins and adding to his own wealth. His vandalism, misrule, weak and vacillating character ultimately led to his downfall and a miserable death.

In 1320, Dulacha, a Mongol adventurer from Turkistan, invaded Kashmir, looted and burnt the villages and killed the people like flies. Soon afterwards Rinchana, a Ladakhi Buddhist and son of a local chief, raised an army, plundered parts of the Valley got the Prime Minister Ram Chandra murdered, seized the throne and later married Kota Rani (daughter of Ram Chandra) to please the people. Rinchana died soon afterwards (1323 A.D.). Udayana deva (brother of late king Suha Deva) became the new king and married Kota Rani. Kota Rani helped the king to rule Kashmir as best as possible as he was a weak king. He died in 1338. Shah Mir a local chief captured the throne and offered to marry Kota Rani but she committed suicide instead. Shah Mir ruled Kashmir as Sultan Shams-ud-din briefly (1339-42) but gave peace and good administration to the people. While Kota Rani was the last Hindu ruler, Shah Mir truly founded the Muslim rule in Kashmir. His grandson Sultan Shiha-bu-din (1354-73) proved to be a good and strong ruler. His brother Hindal succeeded him as Qutub-ud-din (1373-89). During his rule Sayyid Ali Hamdani came to Kashmir as a messenger of Islamic faith and practices. The next king Sultan Sikander the idol-breaker (1389-1413) went to an extreme in his Islamic zeal by breaking and destroying Hindu idols and temples all over the Valley, including the glorious Martand temple near Anantnag. He also persecuted the Hindus by various means,so they were obliged to leave the Valley and settle down at various places in India. He was - assisted in this evil task by Chief Minister Saifud-Din (originally Suha Bhat a new convert to Islam). It is said that only eleven Hindu Brahmin families remained in Kashmir during his reign. However, his grandson Sultan Zainul-

Abidin (1420-70 A.D) the greatest Muslim King in Kashmir's history, was altogether a different person. He restored decent and benign rule in Kashmir, sent officers to brine back the Hindu families who had left the valley earlier. His was a glorious rule half a century in Kashmir. The people gave him the title of Bud-Shah (the great King). His outlook and vision and administrative wisdom as a ruler are comparable to that of Akbar the great,who came much later. With the decline of the Sultanate over next 120 years the Mughals entered the scene.

Emperor Akbar conquered the valley in 1589 under his own command. The Mughal rule brought modern institutions and progressive administration, flourishing trading practices with Central Asia and other parts of India. In times of distress and natural calamities like famine and floods, Govt. brought quick relief from other parts of India. The Mughal emperors were in love with Kashmir's natural beauty and celebrated it by creating the famous Mughal gardens as pleasure places for the kings and the commoners. This happy situation lasted for one and a half century. With the decline of the Mughal rule in Delhi, no effective control could be maintained over provinces. Ahmad Shah Abdali captured Kashmir in 1753.

For the next 67 years Kashmir's were the victims and witnesses of the most cruel administration that they had ever experienced or heard of, at the hands of their Afghan rulers. It is a dark period in Kashmir's history.

Kashmir came under Sikh rule in 1819 when Maharaja Ranjeet Singh sent his army at the invitation of the Kashmiri nobleman Pandit Birbal Dhar, who personally presented himself before the Maharaja in Lahore at his court. In the process he risked lives of his family - wife and mother who were arrested by the Afghan officers and taken to Kabul. The Sikh rule lasted till 1846, when Sikh kingdom ended following Anglo-Sikh wars after Maharaja Ranjeet Singh's death in 1839. The Sikh rule too proved to be of a rough and ready kind and rather insensitive to local sentiment, traditions and cultural ethos and problems. Kashmir came under Dogra rule after Maharaja Gulab Singh signed the treaty of Amritsar with the British. The British Indian Govt., however, continued to take and active interest in the affairs of the State because of its strategic location in political and military terms.

Dogra rule ended with the exit of the British rule in India in 1947. Jammu & Kashmir acceded to Indian Union the same year when Maharaja of Kashmir signed the instrument of accession on October 26,1947, and sought military assistance for defence of his state against the Pakistani attack.

During the past 56 years that Jammu & Kashmir State has been part of the Indian Union, it has had its own elected legislature, elected Governments formed by different political parties, its own constitution and special Status under article 370 of the Indian Constitution. All through, the State has received generous development grants from the Central Govt. But the tragic side is that the State has got divided into two parts of the Pakistani aggression in 1947-48. A part of the State has been ceded by Pakistan to China whereas China has remained in occupation of Aksai chin area of Ladakh following its conflict and war with India in 1962.

Besides, since the late eighties of the 20th century, under Pakistani inspiration, active assistance and arrangements, a clandestine war is being waged in Kashmir by jehadi Muslim militant terrorist groups in Kashmir by men mostly recruited and trained in Pakistan and Pakistan'occupied Kashmir in the name of "Kashmiri Freedom Struggle". The violence unleashed has led to the death of thousands of people and thousands of them have got wounded and claimed both amoung the Kashmiri Muslims and Hindus. Several lakhs of Kashmiri Pandits have had to altogether abandon their homes and hearths in the valley and live as refugees (migrants) in Jammu and other parts of India. Quite a few Muslims also have left the valley because of the violence. But inspite of near complete migration of the Kashmiri Pandit population from the valley in 1989-90 and afterwards, the remnants of their members (and also some other non - Muslims) have been subjected to sporadic brutal killings involving men,women and children in various settlements in the Valley. This is apart from the major wars India had to fight against Pakistani aggression in 1965,1971 and 1999(Kargil war) besides the one in 1947-48 that laid the foundation of over half a century of bloody conflict between the two countries. Lack of peace and large scale violence in Kashmir has also caused widespread damage to mental health of the people in Kashmir Valley.

KASHMIRI SOCIETY, CULTURE AND KASMIRIYAT

From the foregoing we have got a glimpse of Kashmir's chequered history-the complex phases through which it has passed and the upheavals the people have gone through because of various natural, cultural and historical developments. The story will not be basically different with respect to other major regions of India but because of local factors the story of each region becomes unique in so many respects. So is the case with Kashmir. With respect to Kashmir, a few thoughts come straight to ones mind:

1. Kashmir is a geographical area, a valley in the lap of North -Western Himalayas and one of the most beautiful places in the world . Every Kashmiri feels ever so proud of this fact.

2. It is a society of highly talented people who have made significant contributions to pan-Indian and world culture and history in fine arts, literature, aesthetics, religion, social development, politics, warfare and administration.

3. We have produced some extraordinarily good and great Kings like Latitaditya (724-761A.D.) Avantivanhan (855-883A.D) and Zainul-Abadin (1420-1470A.D). Also there have been very powerful and dominant women rulers like Maharani Didda (950-1003 A.D.) and Kota Rani (1323-1338 A.D.)

4. Kashmir has been home to four great religions of the world namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam,and Sikhism. The followers of each of these religions have lived here peacefully for centuries.

Also prehistoric cultures have flourished here for thousands of years.

At this point, it will be useful to revert to the terms used in our sub headings (i.e society, culture and kashmiryat) and seek some working definitions for them to facilitate further discussion & exploration of our main topic i.e. Kashmiri Pandit identity.

Culture may be defined as the sum total of integrated behaviour patterns socially acquired and transmitted; it includes language, art, morals, law and religion, traditions, customs and institutions, science and technology and all material objects relevant to life and survival of human groups. A simple definition of *Society* could be "a large scale group of human beings cooperating in the pursuit of self-maintenence and self-perpetuation and other socially perceived goals for collective good. And what constitutes a community? A community may be defined as "a sub-group having many of the characteristics of society but on a smaller scale". Implicit in the concept is a territorial area, a considerable degree of interpersonal interface and some special basis of coherence that distinguishes it from neighbouring groups and generates a special bond of unity within it.

So the population, that has been nurtured within the snow-clad mountain walls of the Kashmir Valley, the rough shared history and prehistory, through shared culture and language, through shared creative endeavour and world view and shared spritual values and vision, for thousands and thousands of years does constitute a society. No doubt this society has been segmented -as elsewhere in India-through caste (Jati) divisions characterised by different traditional occupations leading to a state of mutual interdependence. This is a rather complex arrangement but that is how Indian society has existed in different parts of the country for several millennia. Kashmir could not have been any different.

Here we may recall that as far back as we go into the historical past, Kashmiris have been all Hindus. Buddhism came to Kashmir with the visit of Emperor Ashoka (273-232 B.C.) with 5000 Buddhist monks who were settled here. Buddhism flourished in Kashmir for centuries especially under the Kushan kings and reached a high point in emperor Kanishka's (1st century A.D.) time. But with the decline of Buddhismin the rest of India it declined and Hinduism saw great revival. In any case during the reign of Hindu Kings Buddhism survived along with Hinduism and even received royal patronage at various stages e.g. the great and mighty king Lalitaditya built temples for the Buddha along with those for Shiva, Vishnu & other Hindu gods. But eventually Buddhism lost its following in the Valley.

Islam made its entry into Kashmir in fourteenth century through Sufi missionaries who kept coming to Kashmir (and the rest of India) from Iran. This coincided with establishment of Muslim rule in Kashmir through Shahmiri dynasty (1339-1539). followed by Chaks, Mughals and Afghans. Kashmir was annexed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1819 and remained part of the Sikh kingdom till 1846. This was followed by Dogra rule which lasted till 1947.

As a result of about 500 years of Muslim rule combined with the excellent work done by Sufi and other Islamic missonaries in the Valley, vast majority of Kashmiris converted to Islam. It must have started with the lower castes but at later stages many of the higher caste Brahmins also seem to have embraced Islam. The upshot was that long before Sikh kingdom annexed Kashmir in 1819, Islamic faith had swept into its fold vast majority of Kashmir's (including all jatis with various traditional occupations) leaving out only a small population of Kashmiri Pandits (Brahmins). Thus developed in Kashmir a unique social situation of a caste-based society where all but one caste (namely Brahmans) had converted to another religion. But Islam did not wash away (in the name of the equality of the faithful), the caste system or its functioning as an arrangement for social and economic interdependence between segments (jatis/ communities).

However Kashmiri Pandits (Brahmans) did not quite lose their pre-eminent positions (except for some brief periods of persecution/ discriminatory treatment at the hands of Muslim rulers/ administration) by virtue of their education/scholarship, intelligence, fife-style, public image, adaptability and their traditional high social status. Also by virtue of their high standards of education and literacy they had their hold over bureaucracy at various levels even during the worst phases of Muslim rule. When Persian became the court language (in place of Sanskrit) Kashmiri Pandits took to learning Persian (and later Urdu) on a large scale; some achieved great proficiency in the same.

We may safely conclude here that Kashmiri Pandits being the only Hindu-caste in a multicaste society where all the rest of the castes converted to Islam, did not arouse any hostile feelings from the latter because of religious considerations. Here it is relevant to recall that " it was towards the close of the fourteenth century that two basically harmonising religious movements ushered a new peace-generating element among the people the Islamic Sufism or Rishi cult and Brahamanic Shaivism (Pandit :90). Two leading exponents of these schools of philosophy were women poet saint Laleshwari better known as Lal Ded (for Shaivism) and Sheikh Num-ud-din (for Rishi cult). These two mystic saints spoke and used Kashmiri language for expressing their spiritual and poetic thoughts. There was great congruence in what they believed in and propagated through their teachings, conduct and poetic thoughts and creations. They were followed by many other sages, saints and poets writing poetry. with spiritual content and message. Such people who respected and revered by all Kashmiris and people did not think of them as Hindus or Muslims. In fact, even the shrines of foreign Sufi saints (Saiyids) scattered all over the Valley have all along been greatly respected by the Kashmiri Pandits as sacred places. This spirit of reverence and recognition for the spiritual leaders and their message irrespective of their origins as Muslims or Hindus permeuted the fabric of social and cultural life of Kashmiri's and deeply influenced their world-view down to the modern times. This irrespective of the political changes and upheavals that were taking place in Kashmir periodically. Some scholars have called this Kashmiryat. (Pandit:1999)

The underlying idea is that the conversion of Kashmiri population to Islam leaving out only a small minority of Kashmiri Pandits as Hindus could be the basis of serious schism be ween the Muslim Kashmiris on the one hand and the Hindu Kashmiris on the other, but this did not happen. The situation was very much helped by the attitude of the ruling Muslim kings not encouraging any divisive trends in public affairs. The sole exception to this rule was Sultan Sikandar & Ali Shah (1398—1420) whose policy of sustained persecution of Kashmiri Pandits led their exodus from the valley. But Sikandar's son Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-70) completely reversed this destructive policy, ushered in half a century of sane and benign rule and recalled the banished Kashmiri Pandits back to Kashmir. This kind of tragic story was repeated in 1989-90 under circumstances that were created and nurtured by a hostile neighbour, namely, Pakistan, partly as an answer to its own problems of lack of proper democracy and dominance of military in its political affairs for a prolonged period. A very unhealthy development indeed. Contrast this with conditions in India-thanks to our freedom movement and the truly great and wise leaders who laid the foundations of a sound and stable democracy here.

Reverting to the notion of *Kashmiryat* I would venture to suggest that the concept should not merely mean bridging of communities (jatis) across the religious divide (Muslims and Hindus) in a traditional multicaste society (Kashmiri) where Islam had come in as an important factor for cultural change. *Kashmiryat* should mean Kashmiri culture as a whole that encompasses the whole gamut of intra- and inter-community relationships activities and achievements within the Kashmiri society. It has to be remembered that in a complex society, elements of culture are not uniformly shared across groups or individual members. There is division of labour and skills, variation in rights and responsibilities and differences in social-status and expectations across sexes, age groups, other social groups, institutions and individuals etc. But what cuts across these variations and differences is a deep sense of unity in terms of geography, history, language and culture, common physical inheritance (real or assumed) and world view.

The conversion to Islam over centuries of all non-Brahmin jatis and some Brahmins too did create an important element of commonness at some level but this was diluted by the status conciousness and endogamy in terms of the traditional caste system. An over India (and Pakistan & Bangladesh), within a complex society there can be situations of even conflict and violence, competitiveness, in terms of desired goals and objectives between segments (communities/ Jatis) but that does not mean that any of them lose their position as part of the larger society. Witness the anti-Brahmin movements in South India or the backward class movements all over India.

Finally,our answer to the basic question regarding the identity of Kashmiri Pandits today in the context of their historical and tragic mass exodus from the Valley in 1990. Well, we remain what we are. Brahmins of Kashmir i.e. Kashmiri Pandits. We are a segment (a vital segment,no doubt) of the larger whole: Kashmiri society. No doubt our having left the valley will weaken our physical links with Kashmir and other Kashmiris (Muslim jatis), but in our minds our old ties and sense of belonging will remain vibrant and alive. All of us do take great pride in being Kashmiri Pandits (for reasons real or pretended, that is not important). Hearing some one talk in Kashmiri anywhere in India / world will kindle an instant bond that will touch the depths of our heart. So the great need to keep our language alive and growing as a vehicle of communication and literature. Also, we have to preserve our traditions and customs with whatever adjustments and modifications may be necessary in the changed circumstances. Of course, we are only part society outside Kashmir but we have to keep our part of culture alive by whatever means possible.

Finally, as individuals and as a group, we have to pursue the goals of excellence in whatever field we may be involved in. This will go a long way to maintaining our group identity and enrich and enhance our sense of pride and sense of belonging. Finally, cultures exist in the minds of men and women. Kashmiri culture will survive till the last Kashmiri lives. We shall some day return to our beautiful Galley and also in the mean time contribute to its growth as an area of peace, prosperity *and* all things beautiful.

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THE RISHI PARAMPARA...

There have been eminent sages in Kashmir when Buddhism was at its peak here, during the period when the Sanatana Dharma was at its zenith and when Islam came to this land.

The eminent Buddhist sages included Kumarajiva, Sanghabhuti, Nagabodhi and Gunaverman. The Shaivite philosophy was propounded by Vasugupta, Somananda, Bhatta Kallata, Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta.

The advent of Islam brought about a large scale desecration of places of worship, destruction of centres of study and books of knowledge. The healing touch was provided by Sedhamol and Lalded.

Nunda Rishi who followed was known as Sehazananda by the Hindus and Sheikh-ul-aalam by the Muslims. Other saints were Roopa Bhawani, Krishna Kar and Reshi Peer.

Many Sufi saints came under the spell of Lalded and Kashmiri Shaivism. Examples are Shams Faqir, Swachhi Kraal, Nyama Saab, Rehman Dar and others.

Saints in the bhakti *tradition include Parmananda and Krishna Razdan. We have had saint scholars like Swami Ram and Swami Laxman Joo,* mastana *saints like Kasha Kak, Nanda Mo't and Grata Bab and women saints like Sati Ded and Mathra Devi.*

There was terrible oppression of Hindus under the Islamic rule, yet the rishi cult did try to bring about a fusion of cultures. Islam was never practised in Kashmir in its rigid prescribed form. All the saints and shrines were held in high esteem by both the communities.

We must transmit the great tradition of knowledge, philosophy, lifestyle and rishi *cult to posterity. We should retain the* rishi parampara *and yet allow the fresh air of modernity to blow into our minds and hearts.*

CHAPTER 8

SAINTS AND SAGES OF KASHMIR

T. N. Dhar 'Kundan'

INTRODUCTION OF AUTHOR

Triloki Nath Dhar was born in Kashmir. He is a graduate with Honours in Sanskrit from Kashmir University and a topper in Prabhakar from the same university. He is a qualified ICWA from the London Institute.

Right from his student days, he has written with the pen name 'Kundan'. He writes in Kashmiri, Hindi, Urdu and English. For many years, he edited the English section of Koshur Samachar and is currently the Consulting Editor of this prestigious journal.

He is a well-known poet in Kashmiri. His poems have been included in several anthologies and he has participated in numerous mushairas. *He has received many awards and honours, including the Pt.Prem Nath Bhat Memorial Amateur Journalist Award, 2000.*

Some of his well-known books are: Main Samudra Hun *and* Main Pyaasa Hun *(collections of poems in Hindi),* Guru Se Samvad, Understanding Education, A Saint Extraordinary *and* A Portrait of Indian Culture.

INTRODUCTION

The valley that is known by the name of Kashmir has been referred to in the history, literature, memoirs and scriptures by so many other names too, Kashyapmar, Kashparera, Pradhyumna-peetha, Sharada-peetha and Sati Sar etc. It has had so many epithets, Aden of the East, 'Bhu-swarga', Paradise on Earth and so on. One of the names given to it is 'Reshi-Vaer' or the garden of sages. Just as every mountain peak of Kashmir is a place of pilgrimage, every spring is sacred and every cave is a shrine, every household of this holy land has produced a saint. Every village of this pious valley can boast of a sage of eminence. These saints and sages have perpetuated a tradition of peace and piety, truth and divinity that is fondly called the 'Rishi parampara' or the tradition of sainthood. This tradition has crossed the boundaries of race and religion, faith and gender. These saints are reverentially remembered by all sections of the Kashmiri society. Eminent sages have made this place their abode during the time when Buddhism was at its peak here, during the period when Hindu Sanatana Dharma was at its zenith and during the time when Islam came to this land.

Although intrinsically all sages are the same, yet there are different types of them. In the hoary past at the dawn of the Vedic civilization there were seers called 'Mantra-drashta' who perceived the Vedas. Then we had 'Rishis', the sages who pondered over the basic questions about human existence, the Creator and the creation as also their mutual relationship. They propounded different theories and authored erudite and profound texts of knowledge. Then we have had a number of 'Sadhus', saints who wrote spiritual and devotional poetry, gave solace to the suffering people, guided many an aspirant or remained in seclusion. We also had 'Munis' who trained students in their ashrams in various disciplines. In Kashmir some of these saints were erudite scholars who left behind a corpus of spiritual literature, mostly written in Sanskrit. Some of them were bards who composed passionate poems in praise of their beloved God, hymns and prayers, in Sanskrit, Persian and Kashmiri. Many of them took under their tutelage and guided a number of seekers in various disciplines of spiritual exercise. Some meditated in quiet corners and sought the truth as a result of which they were a source of solace to the suffering and the less fortunate ones. Some were 'Brahmacharin', or celibates and some were 'Grihasta' or householders. Some were in their hermitages and some remained in their homes. Many of them did penance in the solitude of caves and some meditated in the traditional 'Thokur Kuth' of their own house. Many wandered throughout the valley and many remained confined to the four walls of their own dwelling. One thing was common.in all of them; they were loved and revered by all sections of Kashmiris and were a source of solace and comfort to everyone who approached them.

This galaxy of sages experimented with all sorts of ways and means to attain the Supreme Truth. It is no wonder, therefore, that profound knowledge has emanated from this land. We have a lot of literature relating to the Mahayana Buddhism. Unfortunately much of it is not available in its original text. However, it is available in Tibet in its translated version. Both 'Vaishnava Agamas' and 'Shaiva Agamas' have their source in Kashmir. Then there is a rich corpus of literature on the Kashmir Shaiva Philosophy, which is unique and is known by the name of Trika Philosophy also. We have texts relating to Tantra, Kundalini Yoga and so many other doctrines. Above all we have devotional poetry composed in Sanskrit, Persian, Kashmiri and other languages. All this is the valuable property left behind by these sages and is the proud possession of all the inhabitants of this pious valley. The compositions of these saints in the form of Vakhs, Shrukhs, Leelas, Vatsan, Bhajans and poems have become a part of the folklore of Kashmir and are sung on every occasion and quoted in the day-to-day conversation.

Early Sages

Unfortunately we have very little recorded account relating to these sages, their lives, their sayings and their activities. Whatever little is known today is what has come down to us by word of mouth or what was recorded long after the time when the sage flourished. Obviously, therefore, a lot of these sayings and writings have got mixed up. There have been a number of Buddhist monks, who not only enlightened the locals but also carried the message of Buddha's prescription for liberation to Tibet, China and Far East. It is a fact of common knowledge that an important Buddhist conference was held in Kashmir during the reign of Kanishka, which was attended among other scholars by the great

Nagarjuna. The illustrious sages, who practiced and popularized Buddhist philosophy in Kashmir included Kumarajiva, Sanghabhuti, Nagabodhi and Gunaverman. They were silent about the existence of God but emphasized living a life of righteousness, care and compassion. They prescribed the eight-fold path of Buddhist doctrine, which would lead to liberation or freedom from the cycle of birth and death.

Among the sages who propounded the Kashmir Shaiva Philosophy, the names Vasugupta, Somananda, Bhatta Kallata, Utpal Dev and Abhinavgupta stand out. Vasugupta, the sage of eighth century had a clear vision of Parama Shiva after a sustained penance in a cave. At His behest he was able to view Shiva-sutras on a rock, which became the foundation of this great philosophy. It branched into two very important but basically same streams of 'Spanda' and 'Pratyabhijna'. The former gave rise to a unique blend of knowledge and devotion, 'Jnana' and 'Bhakti'. A literature of the highest order was produced. It included profound text like 'Shiva Drishti' and delicate poetry like 'Shivastotravali'. The latter brought out a combination of deep philosophy and the practical Tantra'. A glaring example of this literature is the monumental work of Abhinavguptacharya, 'Tantralok'. This philosophy was basically non-dualistic but differed from Shankara's 'Advaita' in as much as it did not subscribe to the view that the universe was 'Maya' or illusion. The argument was that the universe is the manifestation of 'Brahman' and since He is real His manifestation cannot be unreal. According to this doctrine the spiritual quest is a journey from the limited I 'Jeevatma' to the unlimited I, 'Parama Shiva', who is 'Samvit' or universal Consciousness. The Creator is is 'Prakasha' or the light and the creation is its 'Vimarsha' or awareness.

The saints of this period, while emphasizing the doctrine of non-dualism of the Kashmir Shaiva Darshan, enjoined upon the people to follow the Vedic Dharma so far as the other aspects of their life were concerned. These prescriptions shaped the society into a Godfearing, peace-loving, pious and compassionate society, which was kind to all beings, birds and animals. Daily worship, daily 'Sandhya', occasional 'Homa' and the temple-worship became the routine of the common man and the 'Yajnopavit', the sacred thread became the symbol of piety and spirituality. As elsewhere, slowly the religion became more ritualistic than substantial and more ostentatious than profound. Still the common man was peace loving and God-fearing. This continued till the advent of Islam in 14 century. On the political front there was upheaval and turmoil. On the social front there was decline in ethical and moral values and on the religious front there was forcible conversion resulting in mass exodus, tyranny and death. There was a large-scale desecration of places of worship, destruction of the centers of study and books of knowledge. The common man was disturbed mentally and physically. He needed a healing touch and solace and consolation. This was provided first by the sage 'Sedhamol' and then by his disciple the great 'Lal Ded'. While the earlier saints and sages wrote in Sanskrit, Lal Ded used the common man's language, Kashmiri to bring home her message. Naturally, therefore, in her they found a saviour, a guide and a noble teacher who gave meaning and direction to their lives.

Lalded

The Kashmiri language dates back to 8th century A.D. It is unfortunate that the literature produced by writers and poets of this beautiful land during hundreds of years has become extinct. One of the systematic extant literature is a bunch of quatrains written by a poetess known as Lalleswari, Goddess Lalla, also fondly called Lalded, mother Lalla, who was born sometime in mid fourteenth century during the reign of king Ala-ud-Din in a Brahmin family at Pandrenthan near Srinagar. She was married at a young age in a family at Pampore and suffered at the hands of her mother-in-law. She endured all this patiently and from the beginning showed her inclination away from the mundane. Eventually she became an ascetic and expressed her thought, experiences and her attainment through four-liners known as *'Vakh'* (from Sanskrit Vakya meaning a sentence). She came to be respected equally by Hindus and Muslims of the valley so much so that her sayings have remained on the tip of the tongue of every one. These are invariably sung in the beginning of every Raga or 'Muqam' of the local classical music called 'Sufiana Kalam' (literally, Words of a Mystic). There is very little authentic information about her life except that she died at an advanced age at Bijbehara, another village south of Srinagar. There are stories about the miracles performed by her, about her encounters with some other saints and about her previous births. One of the widely accepted stories about her is that she visited the household of Nunda Rishi, her junior contemporary, when he was born. His mother complained that he would not take milk from her breast. Lalded took the baby in her arm and addressed him thus, '*Yina mandachhok na chana kyazi chhukh mandachhan* - you are not shy of having come to this world, why then are you shy of sucking milk?' It is said that immediately thereafter he started sucking his mother's breast. Another story is that when some ladies at the riverside told her that she would be getting a sumptuous meal at the grand feast that was being organized in their house she replied, '*Hond maertan ya kath, Lalli neelavath tsali na zanh* - Even if a sheep, big or small is slaughtered for the feast, Lalla shall have the same stone in her plate underneath a morsel of rice.' Her father-in-law overheard this and then verified that a stone was in fact concealed under the rice in her plate so that it appeared that she ate a lot. There are other anecdotes about her poetic exchanges with Nunda Rishi and the one when her husband broke the earthen pitcher full of water that she was carrying and yet the water did not spill. In spite of the lack of information about her life and sayings, a lot can be deduced from her writings.

Lessons in tolerance

There are dozens of her 'Vakhs' wherein she advocates tolerance and forbearance, both in worldly affairs and in spiritual realm. She got ill treatment at the hands of near and dear ones as also from others who spoke ill of her both at her back and at her face. She brushed it aside by saying that it was in the human nature to speak ill of others just as it was in the nature of water to flow, in the nature of the Sun to give heat and in the nature of the Moon to wax and wane. '*Zal hav mali lusui na pakan pakan, Siriyi lusui na volgan Sumeru, Tsandrama lusui na maran zevan, Manush lusui na karan nendya* - water is not tired of flowing, the Sun is not tired of melting the snow on the mountain peak of Sumeru, nor is the Moon tired of waxing and waning. Likewise the man is not tired of speaking ill of others.' She was aware of the backbiting people indulged in about her for she says, '*Leka ta thoka sheri hetsam ninda sapnam pata bronh tam* - People spoke ill of me in my presence and behind my back and I tolerated all the abuses sportingly.' She had an unflinching faith in her God and, therefore, she made it a point not to hate these adversaries. She has made this clear in these words: '*Yus hav mali gelyam ta maskhara karyam, su hav mali manas* *kharyam na zanh. Shiv panunai anugrah karyam, luku hund hedun karyam kyah* - I have no rancour for a person who speaks ill of me or makes fun of me. If Lord Shiva bestows His grace on me how shall these adverse remarks of people affect me.' In the spiritual realm also she considers tolerance as purifying water that enables the seeker to have a tete -a- tete with the Lord. In her words, *'Sahnaki salilai yodvai mal kasakh, asakh aena khota prazalvun sheena khota pron. Panay marakh, panay lasakh, lagakh on, zor, kol ta ron. Shivas sateen yali kathan rasakh, chhukh Shiv panay thav pritshun* - If you wash off all your dirt with the purifying water of tolerance, you will shine like a mirror and become spotless like snow. You will control your birth and death as also all your sense organs once you revel in conversation with Shiva. You will realize that you are yourself Shiva and there is no need to make enquiries.'

Love and harmony

It has been common with all types of sages and savants to preach love and harmony. Kabir has said this in his unique rustic way, *'Dhai aakshar prem ke pade so pandit hoi* -The learned is one who has studied the two and a half letters of the word love (The Hindi word for love is Prem, which when written comprises two and a half letters)'. The great Lalla of Kashmir was no exception. She has described the way she nurtured love for her beloved God in a number of her Vakhs, in a variety of expressions. She has compared love with ever burning fire. *'Loluk naar Loll loli lalanovum* - I cradled the fire of love in my bosom'. At yet another place she has explained that love is a pestle and mortal in which one can crush the evil thoughts. *'Lolaki vokhlai vanlij pishim, kokal tsajim ta ruzas rasa* - In the pestle and mortal of love did I grind my heart. My evil thoughts removed, I became poised and serene.' In course of time she had become one with God and an embodiment of love. Many great sages and Sufis, who followed her have prayed to God to grant them the same exalted position as she had attained. Even her own preceptor Siddha Srikanth had this to say about her, *'Gav tsath goras khasteiy, sui var ditam Diva* -The disciple has surpassed the preceptor, God grant me the same boon.' Nunda Rishi has prayed in these words: *'Tas Padmanporachi Lale, tami gale amryeth chav. Swa sarim avatar Iwale, tithui mye var ditam Diva* - The Lalla of Padmanpora drank a mouthful of nectar. She is an incarnation to us. Lord! Give me a similar boon as you gave her.' Another Sufi poet has referred to her in this verse: *'Kor Lali ikavata aakash pranas, zan milanav Bhagavaanas sael* - Lalla exercised breath control and realized the Divine,' She had gone beyond the stage of 'I' and 'my' during her life time and her individual self had merged with the Universal Supreme Self. *'Bo dapun tsolum kyah sana karay* - The notion of I has since vanished, there is nothing to do now.' *'ravana manzay ravun rovum, ravith athi aayas bhava saray. Asan gindan sahzay provum, dapunui korum panas saray* - It was only after I lost myself that I realized myself. Thereafter it was very easy to perceive the truth for I practised what I preached.'

Revolt against Falsehood

Whenever ostentation, falsehood and artificialities overshadow the real tenets of a religion and hide the truth, the essence and the reality, a leader takes birth and revolts against the falsehood. Fourteenth century was a crucial period in the history of Kashmir. It brought in Islam to this land and along with it came the forcible conversion and loss of identity. Temples were desecrated, idols were destroyed and there was ruthless persecution of the Hindus. There was large-scale migration to other parts of the country. Hindus themselves had lost their moral and spiritual strength because of their clinging to outward symbols and losing the sight of the real spirit of their faith. Ideologically they believed in Shaiva philosophy, which is based on the doctrine of pure monism and for rituals they were required to follow the Vedas. Forgetting all this, they had taken to ostentatious idol worshipping, ritualistic practices and false show of religiosity. This was not acceptable to Lal Ded. In fact she revolted against all these false practices and laid stress on the essence of Hindu Dharma. Denouncing hollow idol worship she says, *'Diva vata diver vata, hen bon chhui ikavata, pooz kath karakh hayo bhatta, kar manas pavnas sangath* - The idol is a stone and the temple is a stone structure. It is same above and below, which one shall you worship? Better create harmony between your breath and mind.' Underscoring the omnipresence of God she says, *'Soy shail chhai patas ta peethas, soy shail chhai utam deesh, soy shail chhai phervanis gratas, Shiv chhui kruth tai tsen opdeesh* - the stone on the road and on the pedestal is the same. The same stone you will find at the sacred shrine as also in the grinding mill. It is very difficult to perceive Shiva. Better understand the underlying meaning of the preceptor's advice.' It appears that a system of sacrificing sheep at the shrines had become rampant in her days perhaps under the influence of some Tantric practices or some forms of Shaakta ideology. She has vehemently opposed this barbarous act in these words: *'Yi kamyu vopdeesh ditui Bhata, atsitan vatas dyun sotsitan kath ahaar* - Who has given this preposterous advice to you Pandit! To sacrifice a living sheep for a lifeless stone idol?' She was in favour of experiencing the truth and not merely reading atbut it in the scriptures. For her equality and equanimity were the cardinal principles for one to adopt. She has said this explicitly in one of her Vakhs thus: *'Buthi kyah jan chhukh vondi chhukh kani, aslech kath zanh sani no. Param lekhan vuth ongej gaji, andrim dui zanh tsaji no* - You have put on a mask of goodness but in reality you are like a stone with no impression. You have studied a lot but your inner malice is still there.' She was also in disagreement with those who thought that the way to attain truth was through self-torture and self-denial. She could not think of torturing one's soul that was the abode of the Divine. *'Treshi bochhi mo kreshinavun, yena cheyi tana sandarun deeh, frith chon damn ta parun* - Useless is your fasting and all your studies that you are torturing your self. Do not keep yourself thirsty or hungry. Maintain your self by eating and drinking properly.'

A Crusader of Truth

Lal Ded cannot be counted amongst the saints-recluse. She was a crusader of truth. She went from place to place, colony to colony and town to town spreading the message of true worship, non-duality, piety and inward search. Herself also she wandered in search of the Divine, whom she eventually perceived within. About these tribulations she has this to say: *'Maag novum la aag tsolum* - In the severest winters I took cold water baths to purify myself and in the scorching Sun I did penance.' *'Latan hund maaz laryom vatan, aki havem akich vath. Yim yim bozan tim kona matan, Lali booz shatan kuni kath* -I travelled far and near so much that I got blisters on my feet. In the end the one and only my preceptor showed me the path to the one and only God. This being the sum and substance of all the discourses, no wonder those who will hear all this will go mad after Him.' She was vividly conscious about the impermanence of the mundane worldly things. She lamented why One should hanker after these things of transient happiness and lose sight of the Divine a source of eternal joy. Two illustrations should suffice to bring home this message. *'Larah lazam manz maidanas, aend aend karmas takiya ta gah. So rooz yati tai bo gayas panas, vonya gav vanas phalav dith* - In the middle of the ground I constructed a house and then decorated it from all sides. I had to leave it behind when I left this world as if a shopkeeper drowned the shutters of his shop and retired.' *'Tala chhui zyus ta petha chhukh natsanas aamut, vanta mali man ketha patsan chhui? Sorui sombrith kenh chhui na motsan, vanta mail ann ketha rotsan chhui* - You live in such a way as if you are dancing on a marshy land, without realizing that it may give way any time. How does your mind accept all this? All your collections will end in naught. In such a situation, how are you able to enjoy eating with ease?' She is, however, very sympathetic towards a common man for she knows how difficult it is to live a pious life against all odds. She says, *'sansar hav mali yaryuv jangul, lari kelam ta bihi badbo. Ghara karun hav mali pyatha pyon sangur, nerakh nangur ta darog go* - the world is a forest of pine trees. You will get stained with tar and receive bad odour. To run a household is as onorous as a mountain coming crashing down on you. You are likely to be rendered a pauper and proved a liar.' Yet she believes that the creation is the manifestation of God and, therefore it is eternal and infinite. *'asi aes tai asi aasav, asi dore kaer patavath. Shivas sori na zyun ta marun ravas sori na atagath* - We only existed in the past and we only shall be there in the future. It is Shiva who never ceases to remain in the cycle of birth and death like the Sun that never ceases to rise and set.' But according to her this would be apparent and discernible to only those who are inclined towards truth and make an effort to attain that. *'Tyoth modur tai myuth zahar, yas yuth tshunukh jatan bav. Yem yath karay kal ta kahar, su that shahar vaatith pyav* -According to one's taste and preference bitter may appear sweet and sweet may appear bitter as poison. A person attains a position and a spiritual level depending upon his aptitude and the effort he has put in.' She believed that a seeker has to distinguish between his gross body and the subtle one. She has said, *'Tim china manush tim chhiy reshi, yiman deeh mana nishi gav* - Those who view their bodies as distinct from their mind are in fact sages and not ordinary human beings.' She on her part had lost herself in the Divine and advised others to follow suit. *'Kuniray bozakh kunui no rozakh, kuniran kornam hanyakar* -If you realize non-duality you will never be alone (without God). I for one merged with Him and lost myself for ever.'

Role of the Preceptor

Lalleswari's preceptor was Siddha Srikanth, a yogi of highest spiritual attainment, popularly called Sedha Mol. She has referred to his teachings in many of her verses. A few examples are given here. *'Goran dopnam kunui vatsun, nebra dopnam andar at sun* -My preceptor told me but only one thing. He advised me to go from without to within.' *'Goras prutshum sasi late, yas na kenh vanan tas kyah nav. Pritshan pritshan thachis ta luses, kenhnas nishi kyah tam drav* - I enquired repeatedly from my preceptor the name of that Nameless. I was exhausted and tired of asking but eventually something was discernible out of nothing.' She has given highest importance to a preceptor in spiritual attainment, *'sahzas baej yami gorkath paeji, pap-ponya baej chhui pananui paan* -A persons reaps the fruit of his good and bad actions and he who follows the advice of his preceptor attains merger with the Divine.' *'Gora shabdas yus yatsh patsh bare, gyan vagi rati tsyeta torgas. Yandryay shomrith aanand kare, ada kus man tai maaran kas*- He who has full faith on the advice of his preceptor, controls the horse of his consciousness with the reins of knowledge, holds his senses firmly under control and remains in eternal bliss, neither dies nor is killed.'

Her Message and Philosophy

It is very clear that Lalleswari was a practitioner of Shaiva philosophy, who believed in ultimate merger of the seeker and the Divine through yoga. She did not accept ostentatious false rituals. A few of her Vakhs will illustrate her philosophy and the message she seeks to convey. She holds the sacred syllable 'Om' supreme. *'Akui Omkar yus nabhi dare, kumbai brahmandas sum gare. Akh sui manthar tsyatas kare, tas sas manthar, kyah kare* - He who meditates on the single syllable Om and with yogic exercises connects the lower most aspect of his self with the uppermost aspect, remembering all the time this one sacred syllable, for him all other syllables are meaningless.' *'Dama dama Omkar man parnovum, panay paran ta panay bozan. Suham padas aham golum, tyali Lal bo vatses prakashasthan* - I attuned my mind to chant the sacred syllable Om and realized that it was He who was chanting and it was He who was listening. From the statement 'I am He' I was removed and thus Lalla reached the abode of light.' *'Dihichi lari dari bar troprim, prana tsur rotum ta dyutmas dam.*

Hradyichi kuthari andar gondum, Omki chobuka tulmas bam - I closed all the outlets of my body and held the breath firmly. I kept it captive in my heart and whipped it with the sacred syllable Om'. For her non-dualism was the keyword for spiritual quest. She valued equanimity and a balanced treatment for everything. *'Par ta pan yem somui mone, yem hihui mone dyen keho raath. Yemsai advai man sanpun, tami dyuthui surgurunath*- One who treats himself and others alike, finds no difference between opposites like day and night and whose mind is free from duality is the only one who can see the Divine.' Again she says, *'Azapa Gayatri hamsa hamsa zapith, aham travith sui ada rath. Yem trov aham su rud panay, bo na aasun chhui opdeesh* - From the depths of your soul you should chant the principal Gayatri Mantra. You should give up ego and cling to Him alone. One who gives up his ego perceives God. The advice is to give up the notion of I.' She advises that the Divine is to be perceived within and not to be searched outside. *'Chhu kuney chhuna kuney, vuchhum or yor na kuney. Dayi phal ta mol na kuney, tsa tsento garun na kuney* - He is there and He is not there. I searched Him here and there but did not find Him anywhere. One who is after the fruit Divine, for him nothing else has any value. You have to perceive God and not to search for Him.' *'Kava chhuk divan anine batsh, trukai chhuk ta andrey atsh. Shiv chhui ati tai kun no gatsh, sahaza kathi myani kar to patsh* -Do trust my straight forward word and go inwards. Why are you groping in the dark like a blind man? Shiva is inside you and you need not look for Him elsewhere.' For her the seeker and the sought-after are one and the same. *'Ora ti panay yora ti panay, panay panas chhuna melan. Pratham atses na mule danai, sui hav mali chhai ashtsar zan* - He is the seeker, He is the sought-after. Yet the two do not meet. There is not even hairline difference between the two. This knowledge is the wonder of wonders.'

Style and Diction

Lal Ded has written only in Vakh form, which was earlier used by Shitikanth in 'Mahanay Prakash'. These are generally four-liners but the meter is not the same. Sometimes there is one meter in the first and third line and a different one in the second and fourth line. The style is clearly adopted from Sanskrit Shlokas and enriched by a rhyme scheme both internal and line ending. The language used is pure Kashmiri and vocabulary heavily drawn from Sanskrit, as must have been in vogue during that time. Since the Muslim rule was already established with Persian as the official language, a sprinkling of Persian words is also seen at places. However, the diction is appropriate to the topic dealt with in these Vakhs. Words used are musical and soothing to the ears and the examples galore in these Vakhs have been taken from day to day life. Some Vakhs are so musical that these can be sung to the accompaniment of a grinding mill or even in tune with the steps of a dance form, starting from low beats to fast beats. Two examples are given as follow: '*Yot bo gayas tati os sui, tati dyuthum mol sui, kanan tshanith vol sui, sui ta sui, sui ta sui, sui hai sui, bo kusui* - Wherever I went He was there, I saw Him as the father of all, only He and none else. If He is He, who am I?' '"*Grata chhu pheran zere zere, ohkui zani gratuk tshal, grata yali pheri ta zawyul nere, gu vati panay grataibal* - The hand-operated grinding mill moves round and round only if it is pushed so. The central rod round which it moves feels the brunt of this movement. This movement only produces fine flour, which eventually reaches its destination'. The underlying meaning is that one has to do ones deeds although He alone is the real doer, and these deeds only lead to the desired goal.'

How examples from daily life have been cited to illustrate deepest of thoughts, can be seen from these verses, "*atha ma ba travun kharba luka henza kongvari kheye* - Do not let loose your mind lest it goes astray, like a freed donkey eating the precious saffron plants belonging to others.' '*Hachivi harinji pyetsyuv kan gom, abhakh chhan pyom yath razdane, manzbag bazaars kulfa ros vaan gom, tirtha ros paan gom, kyah sana karay* -My wooden bow got an arrow of grass reed (how could I take the aim at the right thing?), I wanted to build a castle but employed an inexperienced carpenter (I did not act in the right way), my life became insecure like an unlocked shop in the middle of a market, my body and soul remained impure like a person without a bath, what is to be done?'

These sayings of this great saint-poetess have come down to us largely by word of mouth. The authenticity of some of these is in doubt and many interpolations are suspected. There is, however, an authentic translation of about sixty verses in Sanskrit by Bhaskara Pandit. One hundred and seven Vakhs were translated into English prose by Grierson and Barnett and rendered into verse by Richard Temple. Pandit Anand Kaul brought out a collection of seventy-five

Vakhs with English translation along with a brief life sketch of the poetess. There are other collections by S.N.Charagi, Prof. Jaya Lal Kaul and other scholars and the one brought out in a special number by the journal 'Koshur Samachar' with Hindi and English translations comprising one hundred and sixty-one verses.

Her poetry is so comprehensive, so deep and meaningful, so enchanting and melodious, so varied and rich that one can write volumes explaining and analyzing the hidden meaning and the purport of each verse. She has addressed to God as if echoing the sentiments of this devotional verse in Sanskrit: *'Ratnakaras-tava griham grehini ca Padma. Kim deyama' sti Bhavate jagadisvaraya?* - Your abode is the ocean full of jewels and pearls. Your consort is Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth. You are the Lord of universe. Such being the case, what can we offer you (that you may not have)?'

Gagan tsai, bhutal tsai, Tsai chhukh dyan, pawan ta raath,
Arg, tsandun, posh, pony a tsai, Tsai chhukh sorui ta lagizi kyah.

(You are the sky, the earth, the air, the day and the night. You are the offering, the sandalwood, the flowers and the water. You are everything, what is there to offer you?)

Nunda Rishi

Another great name after Lal Ded in the 'Rishi' tradition of Kashmir is that of Nunda Rishi. He is remembered by Hindus by the name of Sahazananda and by the Muslims as Sheikh-ul-aalam. He was much younger to Lal Ded and is equally respected and adored by both the communities. His life is full of mysteries. He was coaxed to attend to the mundane world of family and vocation. He was married and got two children. Even then he could not get trapped in the superficial world of name and form. He did a rigorous penance in a cave for many years and sought the truth. He had a number of disciples including Nasardin to whom he addressed some of his 'Shrukhs' (Shloke in Sanskrit - a form of verse of four lines). He is said to have moved from place to place and wherever he went he came out with a line rhyming with the name of the place. When he reached the village Tsrar he uttered this line: ' *Vola zuva yati prar* - let me wait for Him here itself. Consequently he made that village his last resting place and there is a beautiful Shrine there in his memory, which is a place of pilgrimage for many a devotee to this day. About the change in his life he writes. '*Bata kalah gada gaenyah suti ose doha Nasryo, Vyethi vavas tan chhi nani iti chhu doha Nasryo* - There were times when I used to enjoy the feasts but now I am naked on the banks of the river Vitasta.'

Roop Bhawani

Madhav Joo Dhar was a pious Brahmin who lived in Srinagar. He was a devotee of Sharika Bhagawati and visited Hari Parbat, her abode every day. He desired to have a daughter like Her and it is said that the Goddess took birth in his house in 1621 A.D. and was named Roopa. She is said to be a partial incarnation of the Divine Mother. This 17 century saint lived a hundred years and left behind a fund of profound knowledge known as 'Rahasyopadesha' or lessons in secret knowledge. Unfortunately the language of these sayings is not as easy as that of the Vakhs of Lal Ded or the Shruks of Nunda Rishi. She advocated search of God within and a doctrine of non-dualism '*Antarmukhi drishti tati param gati* - a vision directed inwards is a sure way of reaching an exalted spiritual position'. A number of miracles are ascribed to her. Her nephew, who served her, had no schooling, yet due to her grace he was master of the Persian language. She moved from place to place and made Manigam and Vaskur her places of worship in addition to her father's house. The pot of rice pudding sent by her father to her in laws did not exhaust even when her mother in law distributed the pudding freely out of vengeance. She sent a disciple from Vaskur to her father's house in Srinagar. He was astonished to see the family mourning there. When he was told that the Bhawani had left her mortal frame he could not believe as she herself had sent him from Vaskur. At his behest the sheet was removed and to everyone's astonishment there was no dead body. Only a lock of her hair was there, which was preserved as a relic in a silver casket to this day. She is the preceptor of hundreds of Kashmiris particularly those with Dhar as their surname.

Krishna Kar and his Disciples

Krishna Kar is another great name among the sages of Kashmir. He was well read, pious and spiritually exalted. He has written a hymn in praise of Goddess Sharika in Sanskrit mixed Persian. '*Man aztu nadi tsakri man, pran aztu pranayami man,* *dhyan aztu zapa malayi man, Shri Sharika Deevi namah* - Mind is the centre of my Nadi Chakra, seat of my breath control, means of my meditation and telling the beads of the rosary, salutations to Goddess Sharika'. He saw in a village lad a great spiritual acumen and brought him to Rainawari in Srinagar. This lad later came to be known as Misha Sahib. Once some boatmen were ferrying a boat and singing in praise of the great King Badshah by way of a labour dirge, 'Badshah Padshah'. Suddenly the boat got stuck and would not move an inch till they changed their dirge to 'Mishah Padshah'. Krishna Kar was the preceptor of Reshi Peer, who was born in 1637 A.D. He is said to have taken him under his tutelage at the behest of the Mother Goddess. He smoked from a hubble-bubble, which was later puffed at by Reshi Peer and the spiritual initiation was through. The latter came to be known as Peer Pandit Padshah, Har du jahan mushkil asan - the king of saints who was capable of solving the problems, both mundane and spiritual. He is also said to have performed a number of miracles. He would take out his intestines from his mouth, wash them and then put them back. He could bring back the cooked dishes to their original precooked form, raw rice, green vegetables and live chicken. He once ordered 'Tri sandhya' to appear when the stream was dry because it was not the prescribed date of the pilgrimage and the water came gushing forth. His old mother wanted to go for a dip in the Ganga. He sent her gold bangle to the pilgrim-site through a pilgrim and on the appointed day he asked his mother to have a dip in the river Vitasta. While she was bathing her gold bangle came floating into her hand. This way the saint got the holy water of the Ganga flow into the Vitasta. Such was the spiritual powers he had.

A Misconception

There is a misconception in some quarters that some religions believe in more than one God. This is not true. There is no difference of opinion about the existence of one God, although there is some doubt about the existence of God itself in some faiths. All those who do not doubt the existence of God universally believe that only one Supreme Power exists. There is absolute unanimity on this point among the major religions, religious ideologues, philosophers and thinkers. This view is held by those who believe in Confucianism, Taoism and Shinto in the East, by the Christians, Jews and Muslims in the West and the Middle-east as also by

Indians with Sanatana Dharma as their faith. Even Zoroastrians believe in one God, 'Ahur Mazda' although they also believe that there is another evil entity called 'Angra Manyu', which misleads people. This is more or less like Christian and Muslims' concept of Satan. Christians believe in trinity of God, Son and the Holy Ghost, who they believe are one like water, ice and steam are as clarified by Huston Smith in his book The World's Religions'. As regards Indian view point, the God is no doubt one called 'Brahman' but He is also perceived through various powers of the nature, which are viewed as 'Devatas' (Literally those that shine) as His different facets only. Thus there is universal *'Ekeshwaravad'* or belief in one God. This is called 'Vahdat-ul-vajud' in Islamic parlance. Sometimes this term is mixed up with *'Advaita'* or non-dualism of the Upanishads. Advaita actually denotes oneness of 'Jeevatma', the individual soul and 'Paramatma', the universal soul. This doctrine of the Upanishads is against the tenets of Islam. When a Sufi saint or poet talks of oneness he is referring to this doctrine and not to the existence of one God, for he says 'Anal Haq' - I am the Truth or the God. This is the reason why Mansur-al-Hallaj was hanged and burnt for such an utterance. Sufis were not accepted in the fold of Islam for a long time till Islam lost political power and they became very important instrument in spreading Islam in different countries.

Sufis in Kashmir

Sufis came to Kashmir sporadically during the fourteenth century and assisted the Muslim rulers, who had grabbed political power almost simultaneously, in mass conversion of the Hindu inhabitants of this area. On the spiritual and philosophical front, however, they were up against a rock. They could attack only the exhibitionist and ritualistic aspects of the faith of these people, which was in any case being denounced by-Hindu saints and sages already. The basic tenets, ideologies and principles were authentic, convincing and attractive even for them. They had the background of a faith, which created a distance between man and the Divine, and this was not acceptable in their way of thinking. Here they came across a philosophy that removed all the barriers between God and His creation and made it possible for everyone to realize the Truth. This very much suited their temper and feelings. They were drawn to this philosophy and they made no secret of it.

Inspiration from Lal Ded and Nimda Rishi

The 'Adikavayitri' or the first poetess of Kashmiri language is considered to be Lal Ded, who was a great mystic and a 'Shaiva Sadhika' or the seeker of the Divine through the path of Kashmir Shaiva Darshan. She has left behind a corpus of her sayings, which are in the form of four-liners called 'Vakh' (or Sanskrit Vakya). These have been translated into Sanskrit, Hindi, and English and interpreted by many a scholar. Let me quote two of her Vakhs to denote how she denounced the false exhibitionist practices and pointed to the essence of spiritualism. She has deprecated the practice of 'Bali' or animal sacrifice in these words: *'Yi kamyu vopadeesh dyutui hayo bata, atseetan vatas dyun sutseetan kath ahar?* O Pandit! Who has advised you to offer as a feed an animate sheep to an inanimate stone idol?' Similarly she has ridiculed the idol worship when she says, *'Diva vata deevar vata, heri bon chhui ikavata, pooz kath karakh hayo Bata?* Your deity is made of stone, the shrine is made of stone, everything from top to bottom is the same stone, what are you going to worship, O Pandita?' She laid stress on the need to go inwards and realize the self and perceive the Divine in everything. These two 'Vakhs' of her will make this point clear. *'Go'ran d'opnam kunui vatsun, nyabra d'opnam andar atsun, sui Lali gav vakh ta vatsun.* My preceptor told me but one thing only and that was to go from without to within. Lala adopted this in letter and spirit.' *'Kava chhuk divan anine vatsha, trukai chhuk ta andrei atsha Shiv chhui aet ta kun mo gatsh sahaz kathi myani karto patsh.* Why are you groping in the dark like the blind? If you are wise go within yourself. Shiva is there in your heart. Do trust me since it has come to me naturally.' This great poetess was followed by Nunda Rishi, another great ascetic poet of the Kashmiri literature, who wrote four-liners called 'Shrukh' (or Shloka in Sanskrit). He did penance in a cave and was greatly influenced by his senior Lal Ded. He wrote, *'Tas Padmanporachi Lale, Tami gale amryeth chav. Swa sanin avatar Iwale, tithyui mye var ditam Diva.* The great Lal Ded of Padamanpura drank a mouthful of nectar. For us she is an incarnation. O Lord! Give me a similar boon as you gave her.' In the true tradition of Vedanta he considered the world an illusion. He addresses himself in these words: *'Hai zuva bram chhui samsar ho, zuva marun mothui kava, s 'or ta zuva gara panano.* O my self realize that this world is an illusion, why do you forget the inevitable death; remember your own home, the abode of the Divine.' This influence of non-dualism or 'Advaita' and other Upanishadic principles as were prevalent in Kashmir is vividly seen in the writings, compositions and other verses of the later Sufi saint-poets of Kashmir.

Reverence towards Lal Ded

Let us first see what these Sufi poets have said about their mentor, Lal Ded. Mohmud Garni (1765 - 1855), a great name in Kashmiri poetry, who may not strictly be clubbed with Sufi poets has written a beautiful verse associating every seeker with Lal Ded in these words: *'Tsonza shoobai ba khazmatsei, granz Sahibo hyetsthas na zanh. Ada nav pyom Lala matsei, aavaz vatsei no.* I am nothing but a maid to serve you, no one to be counted by you. Then I got the name of ecstatic Lala, My Lord! Did you not hear my wail?' Shamas Faqir (1843 - 1906, real name Mohammad Siddiq Bhatt), one of the best Sufi poets of Kashmir who lived in Cinikral Mohalla in Srinagar was fascinated by the writings of Lal Ded. He has paid tribute to her in one of his compositions and also made a mention of her having given spiritual guidance to Nunda Rishi. Says he, *'Kor Lali ikavata aakash pranas, zan milanav Bhagavaanas seit. Lali trov zala no't manz pote'/ khanas. Zan milanav Bhagavaanas seit. Tchala gayi Lala ma 'ts shurahyar shranas. Hala tami kor zagi tikalar tarnas. Kala tami tsolnai nafsi shaitanas, zan milanav Bhagavaanas seit. Vopa deesh karni gayi Nunda reshanas. Rindav dophas aini Irfan. Tshyapi tshipras gyundun Shahi Hamadanas, zan milinav Bhagavaanas seit.* Lala did breath control called 'Pranabhyas' to realize the Divine. Lala offered a pitcherful of water to the idol in the shrine to know the Lord. Lala slipped to the riverbank called 'Shurahyaar to take a bath and took a plunge to cross the river of life. She controlled the sense objects in order to realize Him. She went to give spiritual lessons to Nunda Rishi and the knowledgeable found it to be the pure mysticism. She virtually teased Shahi Hamadan, who could not gauge her spiritual heights'. (Shahi Hamadan was a Sufi, who had come to take refuge in Kashmir and was instrumental in converting the local populace to Islam. His attitude towards non-Muslims was rather harsh. A local Kali temple on the bank of river Jehlum in the heart of Srinagar was converted to a shrine dedicated to him.) The meeting between Lal Ded and Shahi Hamadan is, however, disputed by many scholars due to the clash of dates. Another Sufi poet, Ahmad Batawa'r, a contemporary of Shams Faquir (1845 -1918), has described the exalted spiritual position of Lal Ded in this verse: *'Lala matsi kala tso't nafsi shaitanas. Kala karan Alla Lal sape'n hoo. Lola ha'is mahav gayi he Bhagavaanas. Jan chum meelith jahanas saet.* Lala in ecstasy killed all her senses, engrossed in the love of God she became one with Him. My self is one with the universal self.' While poets other than Sufis have also sung in praise of Lal Ded, but the manner in which the Sufi poets have quoted her, repeated her idiom and referred to her clearly shows the deep impact that her philosophy had had on their minds resulting in their express acknowledgement through their verses.

The Impact and the Influence

When religions travel to new pastures they adopt many new things both ideologically and in order to gain acceptance among the local inhabitants. Buddhism underwent changes when it travelled outside India to Tibet, China, Japan, Korea and other places. Christian theology was reformed in Europe quite substantially. To quote Lippman, 'Prophet Muhammad's vision of a united polytribal community fused into one brotherhood by Islam has long since been proved to be unattainable' because of which Islam thrives as a religion but not as a polity. In India also a multitude of regional and tribal rituals and customs have got fused into the mainstream religion. The Muslim Sufis of Kashmir could not also remain unaffected by the influence of the local tradition of thought, ideology and philosophy, which was powerful enough to be resisted. Even though they continued to hold the Prophet and the holy Qura'n in high esteem, they absorbed the major tenets of the Hindu philosophy in their own spiritual practices and prescriptions. This became a very strong cementing factor between the Hindus and the Muslims. The lead had come from Lal Ded when she proclaimed: *'Shiv chhui thali thali rozan mo zan hyond ta musalman. Trukai chhuk ta paan panun parzan, soi chhai sahibas saet zanl zaan.* The Divine verily pervades everything here, don't you differentiate between a Hindu and a Muslim. If you are wise realize your own self and that is realization of the Divine.' The lead thus having been provided these Sufi poets have tread on the same path and have earned respect, reverence and love from both the communities. Let us study the impact and the influence of the Hindu tradition on some of the prominent Muslim Sufi poets of Kashmir.

SHAMS FAQIR

He is one of the foremost Sufis of Kashmir who lived in Srinagar and later migrated to Badgam. He was born in 1843 and died in 1922. His real name was Mohammad Siddiq Bhat. His poetry is full of mysticism and spiritualn messages. Lal Ded had said *'Asi aes tai asi asav asi dore kaer patavath.* We only were and we only shall be, it is we only who kept on coming and going.' Shams said the same thing in his own way. *'Yun ta gatshun mo mashrai, tami gatshit chhu tuhund garai.* Do not forget birth and death because His abode is beyond this transmigration.' The Gita has stated that people see the secret of life with awe and wonder and no one knows the reality of self. This idea has been conveyed by him thus: *'Kyah chhu hayat kyah chhu mamat, kath cheezas nav kara bo zaat.* What is life and what is death, what shall I call the Self (or the Divine)?' Lal Ded had said, *'Phiran phiran nyoth anguj gaji manech dui tsaji no.* Telling the beads of the rosary you have rubbed the flesh of your thumb and finger but the duality has not gone from your mind.' The same idea has been conveyed by this Sufi in the following verse, 'Ha *zahida kyah chhuk tsa karan, raath doh goi tasbih phiran. Mokhta ravi fotus rachhit zom, roni mutsrith shroni shroni ko 't gom.* What are you doing you fool, you have been telling the rosary day and night. Going after fake things you are losing the real pearl. Have I lost the jingle by untying the bells?' Again Lal Ded had dissuaded from giving spiritual message to an undeserving person in these words: *'Syeki shathas byol no vaevze, Khar as gore dina ravi doh. Moodas jnanach kath no vaenze, kom yajyan raavi teel.* Do not sow seed in a sandy belt; you will waste a whole day in feeding a donkey with jaggery. Do not give spiritual knowledge to a fool, as you will waste oil in preparing cakes from chaff.' Shams Faqir has put the same thing thus: *'Nasihat kaerzi no nasli shaitanas, tala kani zanzyan aasi ma kham. Maarfat kyah kari napak banas, tas naadanas kar tsali tshai.* Do not give advice to a satanic person because basically he is raw and not ripe. Mysticism is a waste for an impure one. Alas! When shall his ignorance go away.' The opening lines of one of his ghazals are an excellent example of the non-dualism of the Vedanta. *'Bo chhus kenh nai kho 'd panay, bo kenh nai kas vanay panay.* I am nothing; it is He himself in my form. How shall 1 explain my not being anything to any one.' This can be compared with this line from Shankaracharya: *'Tad-eko-vashishthah Shivah kevalo-aham.* I am Shiva and Shiva alone'. He has described omnipresence of God in these words: '*Mye vuchh har shayi su yaar, chhuno kanh moi ti khali. Vanai bo siri israr yinp aasakh vubali.* I perceive the Divine at every place. Not an inch is without Him. This is the secret I reveal to you; do not get lost.'

AHMAD BATAWARI

Ahmad Batawari was a contemporary of Shams Faqir and lived from 1845 to 1918. He was an advocate of the immortality and continuity of life. In the footprints of Lal Ded he has said '*Hayatuk aaftab chhuna zanh losan, bozan kona chhuk yi chhu yaksan.* - The Sun of life never sets, why don't you understand that the Divine pervades everything equally.' He has freely used the Hindu mythology to bring home his point of view. A few examples are given here. '*Saalkas balkas Shiva Naranas, tsonven ikavata pranas saet. Tarkas saath chum vetsarnag sranas, jan chum meelith jahanas saet. Veshnas, Krishnas, Resh madanas, Maha Ganish tati kas kari namaskar, Ganga raza byuthum Gangabal thanas... Ravun rovmut manz tawanas, Sita sata rats He chhavan, Tsayi Rama Tsandras manz daricha khanas... Shaster dendar gupt gnanas, zuv chhuk Shaster dil sat noor, Ahmad Batawar gupt rood panas, jan chum meelith jahanas saet.* A seeker, a child, Shiva and Narayana, all these four are together to be remembered through the vital breath. This is the auspicious time to bathe in the spring of contemplation, (literally Vitsarnag- a Hindu shrine in the outskirts of Srinagar). The individual self is united with the universal self. Maha Ganesha is bewildered in the gathering of the sages. He sees Vishnu, Krishna among them and whom he should salute in reverence. The Lord of the Ganges is seated at the source of the Ganges. Ravana has gone astray while Sita is engrossed with her consort. She is there with Shri Rama. It is the Shastras (the revealed text) that give the secret knowledge. The life essence for the knowledgeable are these texts while their hearts are full of divine light. Ahmad Batawar has remained hidden and his self is one with the universal self.'

SWACHHI KRAL

This poet lived around the same time in a village named 'Yander' in Pulwama. He was an ardent believer in non-dualism. He says, '*Akh tsa te byeyi bo ganzer maba, haba yi chhui gumanai.* Me and you are not to be taken as different because dualism is a delusion.' *'Dapyomus bavtam pananui mye aasun, dapunam pan panun gatshi thari kasun.* I asked Him to reveal Himself to me. He replied that for that you have to go beyond your self Long before, Lal Ded had stated, *'Larah lazam manz maidanas aend aend kaer mas takiya ta gah. So rooz yati tai bo gayas panas vonye gav vanas falav dith.* In the middle of a field I constructed a house and decorated it on all sides. The house remained here and I only went away as if the shopkeeper left after downing the shutters of his shop.' Swachh Kral has this to say in the same vein, *'Yath fan sarayi dyun chhui shaba, ath manz mo trav dukanai. Path chhui marun az ya saba, haba yi chhui gumanai.* You have to spend just a night in this mortal inn. Do not start a business here. For you have to die now or in the morn; it is all a delusion.' He advocates adopting a vision of discrimination to see right from wrong. *'Dapyomas swarma laegith kyah chhu banan. Dapunam poz ta apuz ada chhu nanan.* I asked him what use is the collerium of discrimination in ones eyes. He replied that this enables one to distinguish right from wrong.' He sees the Divine in everything, the ocean in every drop. *'Joyi manz basith chhui daryav, nav dar aab tai aab dar nav.* The river exists in a brook, water inside a boat and boat inside the water.'

NYAMA SAAB

Nyama saab was senior (born 1805) and he also lived at Chinikral mohalla of Srinagar, the birth place of Shams Faqir. He has time and again reiterated what Lal Ded had said in these words: *"Lal bo drayas lolare tshandan litstum dyan keho raath. Vucchhum Pandit panani gare, sui mye rotmas nyechhther ta saath.* I set out in search of Hun early at dawn and wandered day and night. Ultimately I saw Him within myself and that was the auspicious moment for me.' At one place he has said, *'Yets naad layi su chum nishi, kamyu sheeshi chovnas mai.* That one whom I call aloud is near me. What a cup of wine he has made me drink!' At other place he repeats, *'Shah chhui basith panane gare, hoore mye nyunam tsure dil.* The Lord is seated within me, he has taken my heart away.' Again he says, ' *Yaar chhui gari panane, su no me vane aaw.* My Beloved is within me but I failed to recognize Him.' Nyama seems to have reached a stage where he has shunned the notion of 'I' and 'my'. This is the high point of Upanishadic Vedanta. *'Orai aayov ladith chhav, dopnam sorui myonui gav. Ba dapun myonui vasith* *pyav, ath nav aalim haarith pyav.* He came with all His grandeur and declared that everything is His. The notion of 'I' in me was gone because no reason or intelligence is of any use in this arena.' He has described the status of the Divine purposefully in indefinite terms because he feels that none of the religious schools has any clue to that. *'Sang ta gnyana math heartas. Nyermalas manz myani naav. Shubi shinyah tati khidmatas, pyom tsyatas tas chhu myon naav.* Bouddh congregations (Sangha) and Hindu centers of spiritualism (Maths) are themselves bewildered; the boat of my life is in the pure sacred waters. Even nihilism is meaningless there for I realized that He and I are one - with the same name.'

SHAH GHAFUR

This great Sufi lived in the beginning of 19th century at village Chhivan in Badgam. He has adopted the Vedantic dictum "So'ham" (or I am He) in its pristine purity and has written a full poem with this title. *'Brahma, Veshan, Maheeshwar garun, shuft ho chhui tyuhundui zuv. Pan hai khatanai jan hyekh marun, darnayi damn suhamsu.* Seek to know the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva as they are the givers of your life. If they hide themselves from you give your life at their feet. Adopt always the great mantra of 'I am He'. *'Bashar travith, Ishar tsa garun, Isharas saet roz sapnakh sui Ishar sapdun sharir gav marun.... Dah chhi avtaar zanh lagi na tharun, mah zan prazlan naran chhui, Ram Ram karun gav naam sandarun, daranayi darun suhamsu.* Leave the individual soul and go after the Universal soul. Remain with God and you will become God. For that you have to shun your self. There are ten different incarnations of God. Narayana only shines in all of them like the Moon. So you need not feel hesitant. Repeating the name Rama is the way to remember God and once you get habituated to that you will feel one with the Divine.' Saying so he is at once reminded of the crucification of Mansoor and he warns, *'Chhu vanan Shah Ghafur vati ma marun.* When Shah Ghafur says that the Divine and I are one, he should not be crucified for this truth.' Again he says, *'Shah Ghafur pazichi han chhuna bavan, tan chhas rachhni lachha bo 'd jaan. Po 'z gatshi aashkar asi maranavan.* Intentionally Shah Ghafur avoids telling the truth. After all he has to save his skin for the life is very precious. If he reveals the truth (of oneness of God and man) he will be killed.'

ASAD PARAY

Asad Paray is a later poet who lived in village Hajin (1862 to 1930). The effect of Hindu mythology and philosophy is apparent from most of his poems. 'Naran naguk mas' is a glaring example of this influence. It would suffice to quote a few stanzas from this poem. *'Om ba karith drass Omkarasay, Om Narayan sat logum saet, tosas Omki pan khalmasay ba rasa rasay kornas tayar. Suhamsu yaar vuchha novnasay tathya Rama tsander sholyav, sayas tahndis tal thovnasay. Jugyah lagith doonya zajmasay, khalvakh dandakvanasay manz, pranay abhyas sharir zolmasay. Bhavanaki nagarada tan navmasay, bava sara vuchhim divay Jan. Haramokha bala paan mansovmasay, bo rasa rasay kornas tayar.* I started my spiritual journey uttering the sacred 'Om' and the Divine accompanied me all through. I went on chanting Om as if He was preparing me for the journey slowly and steadily. When by His grace I realized that He and I are one, I perceived the radiance of Shri Rama. He kept me under His refuge. In the solitude of a forest I lit the sacred fire like a Yogi. I burnt my body in the fire of breath control. In the sacred waters of the shrine at Bhavan I cleansed my body. This helped me to see the divine radiance here itself. I sacrificed my childhood at the sacred foothills of Harmukh, the abode of Shiva and He geared me for the journey slowly and steadily.

OTHER SUFIS

There is no Sufi poet who may have remained unaffected by the Hindu philosophy, mythology and religious beliefs prevalent among the Kashmiri Pandits. Non-dualism, universality of the Divine, transmigration of soul, continuity of life, chanting the name of God, penance in solitude and maintaining secrecy in spiritual matters as also 'Guru-shishya parampara' or teacher-taught tradition are some of the prominent principles which have influenced these Sufis and which they have clearly expressed in their poems and advocated to their disciples and followers. Suffice it to cite a few examples from other Sufi poets.

Rehman Dar who lived at Chhattabal, Srinagar around the middle of 19th century has said, *'Nishi chhui panas paan parzanav.* He is within you and so realize your self.' Rahim Saab, who lived in Sopore and died in 1875, writes, *'Samah kornam aem Omkaran.*

Chanting Om has created poise and balance in me.' Moomin Saab (1810) has explained the high point of yoga in this line, *'Aslas saet gatshi vassal sapdun ye.* One should get merged with the ultimate Truth.' Shah Qalander who lived at Haigam in mid 19th century has almost quoted Lal Ded verbatim in this verse, *'Lava ta prava chhai navi khota navye, ravas atagath sori na zanh, Shiv Shah Qalander chhuna kansi hyuvye kamadeev divaye Manasbal* The radiance and glare is newer and newer while the Sun cannot cease to rise and set. Shiva is unique and unparalleled and Kamadev is enjoying at Manasbal (A village in Kashmir, literally the lake of the mind.). Another great Sufi Vahab Khar has written a full 'Masnavi' on Sheikh Sanna clearly bringing out his love and devotion towards Hindu tradition and philosophy. These examples can be multiplied by the dozens. The influence is so pronounced that the following line from Asad Paray appears to be the translation of the oft-quoted quotation from the Veda. The Veda has said, *'Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti.* The Truth is one and the seers describe it in different ways.' Asad Paray has said the same thing in this way, *'Kath chha kuni vath chha byon byon.* The Truth is one but the paths leading to that are different.' This points to the mountain peak theory according to which the ultimate Truth is like a mountain peak, which can be reached from many sides. Of course the climb may be easy and smooth from some sides and steep and tough from others. It is high time that we realized the truth of this statement and started respecting each others religious beliefs and customs so that harmony, love and peace are ensured for all times to come. It is not only important to respect each faith but also to accept the validity of these faiths propounded by different seers and sages.

The non-dualism is a universal experience and the great thinkers of every religion have sometime or the other contributed to this on the basis of their own experience. Dionysus the Areopagite, a Christian monk of the 5th century has said, "Then beyond all distinction between knower and known the aspirant becomes merged in the nameless, formless Reality, wholly absorbed in that which is beyond all things and in nothing else... Having stilled his intellect and mind, he is united by his highest faculty with That which is beyond all knowing." Malise Ruthven in his book on Islam has this to say, "In the long term modernization is a global process...Muslim souls are likely to find the Sufi path of inner exploration and voluntary association more rewarding than revolutionary politics."

In an article published in The Times of India Jamal Ahmad Khan has observed, "The Sufi saints, Muslim scholars and Islamic sects were liberal in their out look a la their Hindu counterparts and recognized that there were several paths to God, Love of God and service to mankind were their most important principles They were believers in pantheistic monism, the earliest exposition of which is to be found in the Upanishads." Lao-tzu has said, 'Knowing others is wisdom and knowing yourself is enlightenment.' The bottom line is that the emancipation lies in realizing immortality of the soul and in awareness of the Self. This is what Sufi poets of Kashmir have absorbed and expressed in their poems in the true tradition of the Hindu sages.

PARAMANANDA AND KRISHNA RAZDAN

The uniqueness of the saints and sages of Kashmir has been that they presented a blend of 'Jnana', knowledge and 'Bhakti', devotion. We have seen this in the Sanskrit works like 'Shivastotravali', in the 'Vakhs' of Lal Ded and in the poems of Sufi saints, as detailed above. Kashmir has produced some sages who have given more importance to devotion and surrender. Paramananda and Krishna Razdan are the two names that stand out in this category. While Paramananda was a devotee of Shri Krishna, Krishna Razdan was a worshipper of Shiva. The former was senior (1791- 1879) to the latter (1850-1926). Consequently there was some influence of the senior on his junior. Their villages were not very far apart. Paramanand belonged to Seer in Mattan and Krishna Joo to Vanptun. both in South Kashmir. Both of them wrote devotional poetry and propounded the philosophy of complete surrender before the Divine. They emphasized that one's own actions shape one's life but the Divine grace can also be earned by unqualified devotion, a detached life and pious resolve. In their ecstasy of love for the Divine they have sung of the tantrums and mischief of Shri Krishna, the tricks of Lord Shiva as also their benign love, compassion and kindness for their devotees with unflinching faith. These lines of Paramanand are immortal and a lesson for humanity for all times: '*Karma bhumikayi dizi dharmuk bal, santoshi byali bovi ananda phal* - Reinforce the fertile land of action by the fertilizer of righteousness. Sow the seed of contentment and you will reap the fruit of eternal bliss'.

More Recent Scenario

In the recent past also there has been a galaxy of sages in almost all corners of Kashmir. It appears that perhaps this land is fertile for spiritual experience and achievement. And why not, it was intended to serve this purpose by the founder of this celestial valley, the great and immortal Kashyapa, after whom the land is named as such. We have had the renowned Shaiva saint-scholars Swami Ram, Swami Mehtab Kak, Swami Vidhyadhar Ji and Swami Laxman Joo. The last named had his 'Ashram' at Ishaber near Shalimar Garden on the bank of the Dal lake. This is the place where scores of his disciples got lessons in this doctrine, guidance to attain the Truth and answers to their queries arising out of their spiritual quest. To a visiting delegation of some philosophers he once made a very profound remark in these words: 'the logic and reasoning will take you up to a point beyond which you will find them useless. Only yoga will help you thereafter.' There are a number of centers established by his disciples all over the country, which serve as the seats of inspiration for attaining the Divine through this unique philosophy, the pride of Kashmir.

There have been a number of 'Mastana Sadhus' or saints who remained engrossed in their spiritual ecstasy. Kasha Kak of Maingam, Nanda Mo't and Pratha Mo't, Grata Bab, Rehman Sa'b, Lassa Sa'b and many others. Rehman Sa'b was known for his 'Zikir' - a sort of rhythmic movement of his head and body and during this period whatever he uttered would come true. People would run after these saints and seek their blessings. There would be no direct answer to any query. Most of them would speak incoherent something that would answer the query of the devotee, whether expressed or within his mind. They were mind readers. Nothing was hidden from them. Even if one would not speak out what his problem was he would get redress uncalled for. There were quite a few women saints as well. Among them Sati Ded and Mathra Devi were very popular with ordinary Kashmiris. There used to be a congregation of people before them and they would provide a healing touch to their woes and solace to their suffering. Mathra Devi left her mortal frame in 1985 at the age of 106. In her later years she shifted from Shivala and Sheetal Nath Ashrams to Durga Nag at the foot hill of Shankaracharya. There were some saints like Balak Kak who stayed in an ashram. There were others like Shankar

Razdan, Kasha Mala, Zana Kak, Aftab Joo, who stayed in their homes. Some of them performed unbelievable miracles.

It is said that Maharaja Pratap Singh was a regular visitor to Shankar Razdan's house at Chhattabal. Once when the Maharaja came to him he was running high fever. He removed his blanket and kept it aside. Maharaja observed some vibration under the blanket when he sat in front of Razdan Sahib. On enquiring he told him that because of his visit he had kept the fever under the blanket so that the Maharaja's visit is not disturbed. Wherever these sages were, their devotees would throng to their abode, some for spiritual guidance and others for redress to their mundane problems. Bhagavaan Gopi Nath Ji was a class apart. Born at Bana Mohalla in 1898, he lived for 70 years. A chillum and a Dhooni were his constant companions. In his early days visiting sages and shrines was his pastime. He had complete control on the elements. He could cause change in weather and defer death at will. He would be present at more than one place at a time. He was seen at the battlefront in various wars, even long after he had given up his gross body during the Kargil war against Pakistan. To an Australian devotee he appeared during his meditation and suggested that all the religious centers and organizations of the world should unite and strive for the wellbeing and emancipation of the mankind. He is rightly called the 'Jagad Guru', preceptor of the world. Not only in the capital city of Srinagar but also in the villages and far flung areas there were saints of very high spiritual position, Mirza Kak, Mauni Baba, Kishi Bab, Himmat Kak et al. They all had the same message of piety, purity and divinity for the people at large.

Shaping the Society

These great saints and savants have played an effective role in shaping the Kashmiri society. Up to the advent of Islam in 14th century, whether the Buddhism was in vogue or the Hindu Sanatana Dharma was prevalent, Kashmiris were spiritually inclined. Worship, meditation, Havan, temple worship, circumambulation round the Hari Parbat and in the temples and shrines around the idols, 'Moortis' of the deities formed their daily routine. Scholarship was respected. Reading the scriptures, particularly the Gita, the Panchastavi, the Bhawani Sahsranama was very common. People would go on pilgrimage to different pilgrim centers including Sharada, Ganga

Jatan, Swami Amar Nath, Sangam at Shadipur and Tula Mula. A pilgrimage to the three 'Sandhyas', Tri, Rudra and Pawana and the three mountain shrines, Hareswara, Tsareswara and Mahadeva was considered to be a source of liberation. Thus goes the common saying, *'Ha 'rsho 'r, Tsa 'rsho 'r ta Mahadiv kaerzihe adai maerzihe ta toti kentshah, Trisandya, lodrasandya, pavanasandya kaerzihe adai maerzihe ta toti kentshah* - It would be wonderful if one were to die after a pilgrimage to the three Sandhyas or three mountain shrines'.

After the advent of Islam a new problem arose, that of harmony and brotherhood between the Hindus and the newly converted Muslims. Hindus were in a bad shape of mind. Their psyche was badly bruised because of coercion, conversion and desecration of the shrines, exodus and tyranny during the Pathan and Moghul rule. There were good governors like Ali Mardan Khan, who had faith in Hindu philosophy and way of worship and who sang, *'Huma asle Maheswara bud shab shahe ki man deedam* - The one whom I saw during the night was none else than Lord Shiva'. There were bad governors like Jabbar, who forced the Hindus to perform the festival of Shivaratri in June in stead of February to see if it would rain and snow as the Hindus believed; to his astonishment it did while the pooja was being performed in every household. There were rulers who ordered Hindus not agreeing to get converted to be put in the sacs and be drowned in the waters of the Dal Lake. Cartloads of sacred thread removed from their necks were burnt in public. In this grim atmosphere it was important that there should be some refuge to provide for peace of mind, tranquility and solace to the bruised psyche of the original inhabitants. These saints and sages provided this in a great measure.

Since the Sufi saints were greatly influenced by the Non-dualism, contemplation and devotion practiced by the Hindus they also contributed to a healthy cultural symbiosis. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Islam was never practiced in Kashmir in its rigid prescribed form. People worshipped in shrines of the Muslim saints, symbols like trees and springs along side offering Nimaz, keeping fast in the holy month of Ramazan and performing Hajj (by the affluent). Consequently both the communities held almost all the saints and a number of shrines in high esteem. The Muslim boatmen carrying the pilgrims to the shrine of Goddess Rajna at

Tulamula would abstain from taking non-vegetarian dishes and even onion and garlic. Hindus passing by the shrine of Dastagir Sahib in down town and other shrines like Batamol, Narpeerastan etc. would bow reverentially near the gate of the shrine. Every classical singer, mostly a Muslim would sing the vakhs of Lal Ded before rendering any raga. All this contributed to a remarkable fusion of cultures and presented a composite culture, in which every faith was respected, revered and accepted as valid. Unfortunately there has been erosion in these values for political reasons that has created havoc and rendered this paradise on earth into a hell.

The Task Ahead

As inheritors of this great tradition of knowledge, philosophy, life style, rituals and the 'Rishi Cult' it devolves on us to preserve this valuable treasure for the posterity. It is also desirable that we try to enrich this tradition by our own contribution. This has to be done at two stages. Firstly we have to make sure that we are not cut off from our roots. For this purpose we must learn and use our mother tongue and the language in which this knowledge has been preserved. We can then react, comment on and reinterpret the lofty ideals that have been passed on to us by our forefathers. We can also perpetuate the useful aspects of our life-style, beneficial rituals and the qualities of the Rishis of yore. Secondly we have to keep all the ventilators open to allow fresh air of modernity in. We have to reform ourselves, shun all useless and outdated customs and adopt the new and fresh ideas. This will cleanse our tradition of all unnecessary burdens and keep it ever vibrant and help us move on with the times. This is the beauty of our Sanatana Dharma that it is ever evolving and does not brook any stagnation. Let us water the roots and allow fresh air to the branches and leaves so that this tree of our tradition, 'Parampara' remains evergreen. We have to take a pledge that we shall do all that is within our means to keep this tradition alive and the commemorative days of our great Rishis are the proper time to think about this and take this pledge. Rest of the year should be the period of our action for any lofty idea is meaningless unless it is translated into action.

A concerted and meaningful research is another area deserving our attention. For this purpose manuscripts and old records available at various centers within the country and abroad and preserved by some in their homes and private collections need to be traced out. There must be a descriptive catalogue of all this material. Scholars and students of ancient wisdom need to undertake an indepth study of these collections and bring to light the rich contriburtion of our sages, savants and erudite scholars. This will not only throw light on the missing links, not only put the record straight but also counter the distortions and false assumptions made deliberately or due to lack of authentic knowledge on the part of some scholars. We shall earn the blessings of these ancient sages if an authentic and correct account of their life and teachings is brought out for the benefit of our progeny.

THE KASHMIRI DIASPORA...

The Kashmiri Diaspora has scattered far and wide, enriching Indian and world cultures. The oppression that the Pandits suffered in medieval times resulted in the spread of the Diaspora across much of Northern India, especially the hill States.

An outstanding result of this migration was the exodus of Kashmiri artists to the neighbouring princely States. The family of Pandit Sen Raina alone had forty-six members spanning six generations, who were responsible for the beautiful miniatures of the Basohli, Guler, Jammu, Chamba, Mandi, Kulu, Sujanpur, Patiala and Tehri Garhwai schools of the Pahari Kalam. Art critics have acclaimed these miniatures as masterpieces and Kashmiris should be extremely proud for having given these precious treasures to the world of art.

CHAPTER 9

KASHMIRI ARTISTS AND THE PAHARI REALM

P.N. Kachru

INTRODUCTION OF AUTHOR

P.N.Kachru was born in Srinagar, Kashmir. He graduated from the Punjab University and secured a Diploma in Fine Arts in 1944.

Shri Kachru was a founder member of the National Cultural Front in 1947.This became an effective organization of artists, writers etc. for the propagation of democracy and freedom in Kashmir.

This led to the emergence of the trio, S.N.Butt, Triloke Kaul and P.N.Kachru, who would meet every day, walk, discuss and sketch. In 1948, the artists renamed themselves as the Progressive Artists Association. They held their first exhibition in Srinagar in May 1949 and later in New Delhi in October 1949. Kachru was described by critics as possessing the "Rembrandesque qualities of monumentalism".

Shri Kachru has participated in the National Exhibitions of the Lalit Kala Akademy and held one-man exhibitions, the latest being the one at New Delhi in 2001.

"The Migrants" - this is the calling through which the authorities, the media and the publicity have stamped, marketed and thus made us known. Being an artist and a man of culture I ponder over this calling differently. It is the migration that has given rise to the world cultures. Migrations have been the very basis and the reason for interaction between the races and tribes that sauntered on the surface of the most ancient soils. It is through migrations that different cultures, beliefs and philosophies interacted, got enriched, intermingled and mixed-up into the cauldron of commingled interaction through which human culture got thickened and concocted into a highly energetic tonic that turned the human being worthy of calling himself civilised. The mighty drama of migratory comminglement of the three earliest sisters of civilisation, nourished the Indo-Mesopotamian culture. The massive migration from the North, seeking warmer pastures, resulted in Indo-Aryan or Indo-Germanic culture that gave birth to Vedic and the Zendic cultures. The great Indo-Bactro-Grecian culture that mixed-up and thrived in North-Western India and was responsible for the evolution of richest movements known as Gandhara and Mathura Schools which were destined to thrive into the golden age of Guptas. This cultural movement was responsible for infiltration and enrichment of North India, which culminated into the aesthetic pinnacles of Kashmir school by establishing, now internationally known, the Wushker Baroque[1]. These powerful trends were migrated-in deeply by artists of Kashmir, to little and greater Tibets, Central Asia, Mongolia and China.

EARLIER MIGRATION

Kashmir also had its share of migration-in and migration-out of various hordes, tribes and communities. The compromise of Nila with the migratory Kashypa and the regular combined expeditions towards North for the massacre and annihilation of Pisachas over the desert of Takalamakan; twice the destruction of Poomadisthan, the ancient city of Srinagar, by the Toonganees who were the ferocious cross-breed from Mangols and Chinese women, all these are the well-established facts of the cross-cultures of our history.

The Kashmiri painters, in their heyday of established movements had chiseled and garnished a style based on the traditions of Harvan formalism and Baroque of Wushkar school and contented with their philosophic thought. The chromatically decorative element composed with spatially organised figurative symbols constituted the great Kashmir murals, of which the majestic but lingering appearance still stands in the monasteries of Alchi in Ladakh, waiting pathetically for its demise. Further, the style was subtly and sensitively ornamented with the linear sensibilities observed in Mathura and Pala schools while their seasonal sojourns and pilgrimages.

Hordes of such aesthetes and creators went out in the company of eminent and propagating Kashmiri scholars under numerous leading painters like Hasuraj and led their artistic movement as far as into Tibet, while contributing to the establishment of themes of Buddhistic Mahayana-Vajrayana in Central Asian regions.

The barbaric and devastative onslaught of Islamic iconoclasm, ushered in early thirteenth century, vandalised, ignited and razed to ground all the monumental edifices and temples of national sanctity along with the invaluable and creative wall frescoes, murals and gold gilt paintings. The examples are still lingering over the mud walls of monasteries of Alchi. Consequent to this the Kashmiri painter suffered a deep cultural shock and a grievous starvation for means and methods of expression. But, as always like a typical Pandit he not only survived the shock but came up with an alternative equipment that did not only bring forth but strengthened and energised the Kashmir miniaturist movement. Thus the base for expression shifted from monumental areas and structures to portable areas of Burjapatras and home made papers. This alternative means for expression did not only safeguard the continuance of his creativity secretly, but also made it easy for him to carry his masterpieces in case of his migration to seek shelter for his life. This physical fanning out widened the field of diffusion for the Kashmir style, leaving behind the pieces of master-expression not only in neighbouring Himachal principalities but in places of pilgrimage like Kurukshetra, Vrindavan, Haridwar and in as far away places as Sangam and Varanasi.

During the transitory periods of peace in the valley the customary pilgrimages, particularly in winters, had taken the shape of an intensified yatra of Sthanapatis (Thanapti) from numerous religio-cultural centers like Jeshtheswara, Martand (Matan) and Vijeyashwra (Vejabror). This would compensate their prevailing penury through annual visitations to their Jajmans living in various Indian principalities. These hordes of migratory Brahmins were joined by numerous painters, calligraphers and scribes who, in their search for economic survival, would move from village to village, particularly in neighbouring outer Himalayas and Punjab. The numerous groups of scribes and painters would drop themselves in a nearby Sarai of a town at its outskirts and then fan out in the alleys of township and would hawk and call Muratgarrh! Chitragarh! Likharil In later periods of Indian Muslim rule their calls changed into Mussavir, Katib, Mussavir-mi-katib, the painter and scribe together.

In absence of printing technology the profession of a scribe and book illuminator proved to be an indispensable profession that kept the starving Brahmin and painter wedded to his staunch faith and philosophy. He would hawk in the various lanes of Indian settlements and would transcribe and illumine the various tattering Pothis and manuscripts. It had become customary for every household to provide these pundits free quantities of oil, besides their wages, so that they could finish their job by burning the midnight oil. The wandering Pandits would pack up their bundles the moment their job would finish, and would move to another Sarai and seek out their job for transcription and illumination. At the advent of spring time, in case the situation permitted, these groups would return to the valley to spend their summer time with their kin and families.

Various collectors and research scholars, particularly Swiss, German and American teams and organisations have collected a sizable number of such manuscripts and Pothis from various Indian townships, scribed and painted by these wandering pilgrims of culture who have fanned out the aesthetic elements of Kashmir School to wider areas of the subcontinent. Recently, one of the most creative collections of a high aesthetic order lying now in the Museum Reitburg, Zurich from Alice Boner collection of Switzerland, has been published by these authorities. This is one of the finest collections of Kashmir School, depicting the various forms of Shakti as interpreted through the creative forms of Kashmir Miniaturist movement.

THE KANGRA SCHOOL OF PAINTING

In recent history too Kashmir had to pass through a convulsive trauma brought in by fanatic converts of Mongol breed that led to the mass exodus of Brahmins, not once but several times, through the past centuries for adhering to their faith and philosophy. In such migrations there were some talented sculpters and painters who, for centuries, had been responsible in establishing the Kashmiri school of sculpture and post-Gupta schools of Pala styles in painting and were responsible in spreading the movement to Tibet and Central Asian regions. Under the severe threat of proselytisation, and under the threat of being dubbed creators of Idolatry, these artists seem to have migrated for their life into the neighbouring principalities of Himachal Pradesh. It was in this region of outer Himalayas where the Kashmir Schools thrived again and gave rise to gorgeous tapestry of art that became internationally known as Pahari movements, culminating in renowned Kangra Kalam or Kangra School of Painting.

This renaissance of Pahari Culture was a post Mogul phenomena when the most of the Himachal princedoms and states could independently look after their principalities. Most of the princes who had to be in attendance to the Mogul court and had to eke out the resources of their states in order to cater to the whimsical demands of the monarch and also, had to see the fullness of the imperial coffers, which not only reduced the states to penury and poverty but also created local cultural vacuum. Most of the artistic talents hovered round the imperial court for seeking recognition and prosperity. This cultural exodus did a great disservice to the then leading northern schools. The artists got detached from their respective traditions, trends and locale and had to be subservient to the moods and methods of the monarch, besides reducing their talents to mere eulogy and falsehood. With the disintegration of the Imperial rule the Rajas and the princes reverted back to their principalities to reorganise their home rule. The cultural scene of the Himachal principalities again reverberated and started rejuvenating amongst its milieu and methods and traditions which were vitalised and reinterpreted by the Kashmir Movement. Thus the post Mogul vacuum was filled and augmented with the rich Baroque introduced by the talented fugitive Kashmiri artist family, seeking refuge from the threat of proselytisation.

This family of Rajanka (Razdan or Raina) brahmins swept the entire region with the genius and were responsible for the introduction of one of the most romantic movements in fine art in almost all the principalities of Jasrota, Bashli, Guler, Jammu, Charmba, Noorpur and Kangra. The family swept, dominated and led the movement through 1658 to the end of 19th century in almost all the centers of art-activity and enjoyed favourable positions with various Rajas of the Pahari principalities.

Pandit Seu[2] Raina is the ancestor of this family who, it is presumed, left Kashmir under the threat of forced conversion, sometime in mid 17th century and settled in Guler[3] during the reign of Raja Dalip Singh and Raja Bikram Singh. Elucidiates Mr. M.S. Randhawa that "Proselytism of Islam was at its height during the last years of the reign of Aurangzeb. In the last quarter of the 17th century and the first quarter of the 18th century a number of Kashmiri Brahmins migrated from Kashmir to Kangra valley to seek sanctuary in the courts of the Raja of Kangra Hill states. It is very likely that Pandit Seu was one of them". Even now, as witnessed during the research on the subject, it has been found that there are a number of families of Kashmiri Brahmins, particularly Rainas, who have settled in Haripur Guler as well as in some villages in Tehsil Palampur. The family's origin has been confirmed repeatedly through their initials on various panitings done by Pandit Seu and two of his renowned painter sons Manak (Mana) and Nainsukh (Nana) who mostly impress their name prefixed with 'Pandit' and suffixed with 'Raina' or 'Rajanka'.

Pandit Seu Raina founded and introduced the "pre-Kangra" style in Guler under the princely patronage of Raja Dulip Singh. The style richly vibrated with an amalgam of Pahari folk and Kashmir Pala style. The static attitude of forms, the solidity and formality of the figures and the division of picture spaces - all these qualities were imposed with decorative brilliance of colours, which imparted the tribal passion, energy, vehemence and depth of thoughtfulness In paintings. These qualities which are basically the elements of Kashmir School, are primarily responsible for the powerful sprouting of Basohli School which, it seems that Pandit Seu and his two genius sons Manak and Nainsukh, have inculcated under the patronage of the then Basohli Raja. As recorded, the most regular and frequent movement of Pandit Seu and his genius sons between

Basohli and Guler do indicate that the father and the two sons must have been working simultaneously" in Basohli and Guler, as the two centers are very near to each other. Besides, the interaction of influences must have worked through past centuries, as then the town has been an important stoppage on the trade route between Kashmir, Punjab and rest of India; and also when Raja Amrit Pal (1757 - 1776) had been a reputed lover of art and culture.

The early quarter of twentieth century regenerated the discovery[4] of these movements, particularly of Basohli which have become much sought after and fabulously priced pieces of art. Incidentally, it was by sheer chance that a sizeable collection of Basohli came as a valued share to our state.

In fact, with Pandit Seu's entry into Raja Dulip Singh's atelier a complete change took place in the outlook of the workshop and brought into practice the style popularly known as "Pre-Kangra Kalam". Later on, the style seems to have spread effectively to other states, but most effectively pursued in Guler, Basohli and Jammu. Subjectwise, Pandit Seu seemed to have invested his genius in portraitures, which could successfully maintain the pictorial qualities of vertical projection and attainment of dimensions by juxtaposition and interspersing of forms and.surfaces over his canvas. Some of his highly technical and dexterous portrait studies are luckily salvaged and preserved in various museuns and collections. Notable of them are : the portrait sketches of his two sons, Manak and Nainsukh, the famous standard bearers of the movement[6]. While he was under the employ of Raja Dulip Singh of Guler, Pandit Seu had done some of the masterly portrait studies superimposed with highly sensitive and linear brushwork; such as Mian Gopal Singh of Guler playing chess (Chandigarh Museum), formarly in the collection of Guler Darbar; "A Seated Courtier" (Victoria and Albert Museum, London); Raja Bishen Singh of Guler (in the National Museum, New Delhi) and again "Raja Bishen Singh", presently in the collection of late Sir Cowasji Jahangir, Bombay, the renowned patron of the modem Indian Art movements. Besides, the portrait of Raja Bikram Singh of Guler, "doing puja" and a "battle scene" (Chandigarh Museum), the "Dancing Darveshes" (in Lahore Museum), all are the subjects for a deeper study and appreciation for aesthetics. The frozen attitudes of hands, the solidity and formality of the figures and the division of the picture spaces - all these qualities were imposed with decorative brilliance of colours which imparted the tribal passion, energy, vehemence and depth of thoughtfulness in canvases. These qualities which are basically the elements of Kashmir School are primarily responsible for the powerful sprouting of Basohli School, which it seems that Pandit Seu and his two genius sons have inculcated under the then patronage of Basohli Raja.

The three generations of Seu Raina spearheaded the fusion of Basohli Baroque to the final flowering of the new movement that culminated in Kangra School. This transformation was the work of a single family of influential artists who originated from Kashmir[7]. The family worked at several hill centers. Guler is the center for this technical development where the family of Pandit Seu got settled in their initial stage. Seu's son Nainsukh is the best known and the most "innovative". He was employed by Raja Balwant Singh of Jasrota (1724 - 1763). After Balwant Singh's death in 1763, Nainsukh moved to Basohli where his elder brother Manaku was working and was practising and propagating the new style. One of Nainsukh's sons was working in the court of Raj Singh (1764 - 1794) the ruler of Chamba[8].

The ultimate blooming of the style in Kangra under the patronage of Raja Sansar Chand (1775-1823) was piloted by the third generation of Pandit Seu's dynasty. It was here that the lyrical Guler style reached a high point in the Love themes of Kangra Kalam and the subjects and themes were from the love poems from the Rasikapriya of Keshav Das, the court poet of Raja Madhukar Shah (1580-1601) of Central India. The Nayak and Nayika in the Rasikapriya are Krishna and Radha, the ideal love symbols of God and soul[9]. "Geet-Govinda" series and "Bhagwat Purana" also were the themes of this movement.

Geet-Govinda of the Vashnavite poet Jaideva has achieved its passionate excellence through the master pieces created by the renowned painter Manaku, the eldest son of Pandit Seu. Poet Jaideva was court-poet of Sena King Lakshmana Sena of Bengal wherefrom the Pala-Sena movement of the Gupta's laid a marked influence on Kashmir School. Besides, as typical of the nature of an artist, Manaku was inspired by the poet's weaving into his songs an eroticism of fascinating hearty imageries which make the poems throb with passion, and above all, the word-music which flows like a murmuring brook gushing in a verdant forest. The rich imageries, the pen-pictures of landscape and the treatment of various states of love became a treasure and a rich tapestry for artist to draw upon. The artist's technical excellence, aesthetic sensitivity and emotional vibrations were idealised through the expression of his lyrical drawings, throbbing colours and quiet landscape locales. Some examples of the most romantic compositions of Jaidev and subsequently emotionally charged transformation by Manaku are worthy of high contemplation :-

"Oh spouse of the cowherd, caressing passionately her swelling breasts, proceeds to sing the Panchma Raga." It is a moonlight night almost at daybreak. Birds are still roosting on the trees. Krishna stands caressing the Gopi while the earliest pink specks of the mom have touched the distant peaks across the meadow. "Krishna says: The hair is disarranged by the tossing of tresses, her cheeks bear drops of perspiration, the luster of her red lips is dimmed, the glory of her swelling breasts defeat the luster of the pearl necklace, she is hiding now her breasts and her privacy with her hands. She is looking at me bashfully and though disarranged, is spreading the light of love." Manakus rendering : It is a lush green composition of undulating meadow skirted by a brook and overshadowed by a grove under which she (Radha) is poised in helpless nude condition besides Krishna. The excellence of mastery over human anatomy coupled with delicacy of body undulations and ebb-and-flow of curvatures is the last word that Manaku has simplified and translated through the simplicity of form.

The two sets of Geet-Govinda by Manaku - one painted in Basohli Kalam (1730) and another in Kangra style - seemed to have raged into controversy in the columns of modem art criticism. It was finally resolved that Manaku, while in the employ of the Basohli Court in early eighteenth century, painted the Basohli set that was in the collection of Lahore Museum which I studied in 1946-47. The second set of Geet-Govinda painted in Kangra style represents the most exalted and final stages of sophistication which Manaku achieved through his experimentation with his techniques and observations. The throbbing and sumptuous colour, controlled but expressive draughts-manship and the lively set-up of the landscape had established the unique standard for Manaku's compositions.

The paintings are supposed to have been painted by Manaku in Guler period of 1760-1770. At some later period of time it appears to have reached the court of Maharaja Samsar Chand of Kangra and later to Tehri Garhwal as the dowry of the two daughters of Sansar Chand who were married into Tehri-Garhwal family. It was purely the genius of Manaku who could establish the Basohli Kalam and then evolve through it Kangra Kalam wherein he displayed all the aesthetic sensitivities and sensibilities.

Another controversy errupted between the well known art historian Karl Khandalavala and the researcher of Pahari movement Mr. M.S. Randhawa; the former claiming that the name Manaku of the Sanskrit verse appearing in the reverse side of the Basohli Geet-Govinda collection, was actually the name of the noble lady and not of the artist who is supposed to have painted the collection. Mr. Khandalavala's plea was that the name does not appear as Manak but as Manaku sounding it to be a female name. However, the controversy was settled by Dr. Raghuvira, the well-known Sanskrit scholar, who translated and interpreted the two identical colophons appearing on both the Basohli and Kangra styles. The Sanskrit colophon appears as given below:

मुनि वसु गिरि सोमैः संमिते विक्रमाब्दे
गुणगणितगरिषृा मालिनी वृत्त विता।
व्यरचयदजभक्ता माणकचित्रकर्त्रा
ललित लियि विचित्रं गीतगोविन्द चित्रं।।

Dr. Raghuvira analyses the two last lines in the following manner: Vyarcayad = caused to be composed; aja bhakta = the devotee of Aja (the unborn,Vishnu); Manaku = through Manaku; Chitrakartra = the artist; Vicitram = charaterised by; Lalita = a delicate; Lipi = brush; Geet-Govinda-citram = The painting of Geet-Govinda.

He translates the whole couplet thus: "In the Vikrama year corresponding to the moon, the mountains, the gems and the sages, viz. v.s. 1787 and 1730 A.D., a devotee of Aja, caused this painting of the Geet-Govinda, characterised by a delicate brush, to be painted by Manaku, the artist". He adds further the literal meaning of the whole verse thus : "In the year 1787 Vs. (1730 AD) Malini, noted for her qualities of discrimination and judgement, and who prized her character as her principal wealth, who was a devotee of the Immortal one (Vishnu), had a pictorial version of Geet-Govinda in beautiful and varied script composed by the painter Manaku". Further he clarifies that 'Manak' or 'Manaku' is a male name in the hills, and is never used as a female name. The female name is 'Manako', 'Gulabo' and so on. While pointing to the grammatic principal and the gender of its Agent, Gopi Krishna Kanoria[10], Scholar and aesthete, clears the confusion in an easy manner. 'Manaku', the principal and its agent 'Chitrakartra' is enough to establish the masculinity of the painter[11].

Manak's younger brother Nainsukh took his service with Raja Balwant Singh of Jammu as well. His entry into the court of Jammu changed the entire mood of the tradition. Identically like his brother he had enough to offer to the existing traditions of Jammu Kalam. Observes W.G. Archer, 'Within this local tradition (of Jammu Kalam) which reaches its height in the portrait of Brij Raj Dev. Nainsukh of Jasrota appears as a sudden mysterious intruder". "Intruder" in the sense that he introduced and prevailed upon the situations by introducing his strong and well organised notions about the pictorial values over which he had a masterly grip and command. His colour schemes and themes were subservient to the organisation of form and the dimensional planes. In short, he could be put in the category of formalists and abstractionists who use natural forms for pictorial organisations. He could be aptly titled as Picasso and Mondrian of the Pahari movement. His is the marked feeling for geometric structure, strong colour and vitalistic line. His whole approach is architectural. His pictures are a series of receding and forwarding planes and thus nothing else could be an ideal contribution to the simple flatness of the local style. Compared to his elder brother Manak who could be called poetic and romantic, Nainsukh was an aesthete and fundamental. A typical example of his planned picturisation is his well-known painting of Raja Balwant Singh listening to music. It is a well planned canvas composed with horizontal and vertical divisions of the background and the palace architecture, within which the Raja and the musicians are mere decorations of the broader planning and composition. Another similar masterpiece is "Raja Balwant Singh of Jammu inspecting a horse[12]".

In earlier career of his Guler days and later on in Jammu his aesthetic and formalistic principles dominated the local tradition, while his occasional short visits, under the patronage of Raja Amrit Pal of Basohli, created a great change in later Basohli period. Nainsukh seemed to be a dominating influence in Jasrota also, and being so effective in Basohli, Guler, Jammu and Chambha.

THE EMERGENCE OF CHAMBA SCHOOL

In the later part of eighteenth century the Sambha principality seemed to have been gaining an edge over the neighbouring Basohli. This was the period when Basohli became subservient to Chamba politically as well as economically. This prosperity seemed to be the reason for cultural and artistic rejuvenation, particularly in the fields of architecture and painting. The movements of Nainsukh from Guler to Jammu and from Jammu to the court of Raja Amrit Pal of Basohli where he laid deep influences of his own style that was a subtle fusion of delicate silhouettes and Pahari colour tones. Thus the element of aesthetic Romanticism was brought in the Basohli - primitive style. The style took firm roots in Basohli quickly and very swiftly. The door wings made in Kangra style were brought by Raja Raj Singh to Chamba when he sacked Basohli palace in 1782[13]. It is evidenced that Nainsukh would visit Chamba court occasionally, and later on, his sons Ranjha and Nikka were responsible for the artistic prosperity and the establishment of Chamba Kalam, it being an ideal fusion of Kangra-Guler miniaturism, Pahari purity of colour tones and element of primitive vigour of Basohli forms. The well-known series of "Rukmini Haran" are a typical example of Chamba School studies.

The subjugation of and predominance over Basohli seems to have been responsible for the emergence of Chamba style as most of the sons of Nainsukh - Ranjha, Nikka and Godhu led the activity of the atelier of Raja Raj Singh of Chamba[14]. Nikka, the third son of Nainsukh, is known to have founded the style in Chamba court but was later on joined by Ranjha (Fourth son) and Godhu the second son. All the sons, Kama, Godhu, Nikka and Ranjha were, along with their father, the Guleria painters and were for sometime settled there wherefrom they laid their artistic tentacles over Basohli and Chamba, finally settling in Chamba. This activity was further strengthened by the effective contribution of Harku and Chajoo, the two sons (third generation) of Nikka.

Ranjha, the most talented one, remained in the court of Raj Singh from 1772-94. These were the years when well-known "Anirudh Usha[15] series were painted by him. Intermittently, Ranjha seemed to have been paying commissioned visits to Basohli where, in the service of Raja Amrit Pal he painted the "Nala-Damayanti" series[16]. This series, though painted in Basohli was the typical chamba style, thus having laid its strong influences on Basohli tradition. In this series there are visibly strong influences of Chamban architectural forms[17].

Ranjha the fourth son of Nainsukh, was most dynamic in maintaining relations from Chamba with Guler and Basohli as well. He seems to have been occasionally attending in these courts, particularly the court of Raja Bhup Singh of Guler[18].

A significant collection of Ramayana series was painted by Ranjha during the reign of Raja Bhupendra Pal (1816) of Basohli. The basic drawings of the series were got made by Ranjha from another Kashmiri artist (not in the family) named Sudarshan[19]. This gives insight into the methodology and process that must have been going on into the workshops of artists, where there used to be a professional division between master-drawer and the painter. Such a tradition in division of work seems to have been lingering on in the house of the last-known painter, Narayan Joo Kachru "Mooratgarh" of Srinagar. The division of work was found between him and his wife where his wife would prepare the drawings and he would complete the miniatures with colours and the brushwork details.[20]

Ranjha's son Gursahai (fourth generation and grandson of Nainsukh) proved a greater genius in drawing and draughtsmanship. Super-sensitive, erotic and highly passionate themes were the main subjects of his paintings. His great studies in appreciation of human anatomical form and its highly interpretative formation could have been the work of a genius only. He thus composed highly sensitive compositions of Nude studies. The "koka-shastra" series also remained one of the chief products of his collections.

Atra, the son of Nikka worked in the court of Raja Raj Singh of Chamba. The inscription over one of his paintings reads the names of Nikka, Ranjha (Ram Dayal), Chajju, Harku (Nikka's son) and Saudagar (the fifth generation and grandson of Nikka) besides himself, mentioning all to be in the atelier of Raja Raj Singh of Chamba.

Ram Dayal, the grandson of Nainsukh worked in the court of Bijai Sen of Mandi. Kiru- five generations away remained in the court of Patiala.

Nainsukh's elder brother Manaku had two sons, namely Khushala and Fattu. The whole family worked in the court of Raja Goverdhan Chand of Guler till his death in 1773. They·continued with Raja Prakash Chand till 1785, but intermittently leading their projects in other centers like Basohli and Chamba. The occurrence of financial crisis in the court of Guler led to the migration to Raja Sansar Chand's court at Kangra. Khushala became the chief painter in the Kangra court and painted a Geet-Govinda series for Maharaj Sansar Chand.

Chetu the great grandson of Khushala (fifth generation) and Sultanu the grandson of Nainsukh, both were the court artists of Raja Shamsher Singh (1826). Chetu's paintings reached the court of Garhwal, but there are indications to his physical presence in the court of Sudarshan Shah of Tehri Garhwal[21], where he established the Garhwal School of Pahari movement[22].

The other important centers of Pahari movement led and established were Tira Sujanpur[23], Mandi,[24] Patiala (a non Himachal centre) and Kulu. The Kulu style is considered to be an ideal amalgam of folk and Kashmir style. Some of the fourth generation Rainas migrated to Kulu in the second decade of the eighteenth century.[25]

Surprisingly, the six generations of Pandit Seu Raina produced about forty-six children, and all of them artists, who penetrated their genius very deep into the mileu of all Himachal principalities, thus embedding the whole treasure-accumulation of four thousand years into their new home of outer Himalayas. It needs yet another treatise to keep their track in all the courts and cultural centers of the region.

The essence of cultural treasure of Himachal Pahari is the decoctant of human experience accumulated through the constant in-flux and out-flux of human migrations and re-migration along with the shores of Mediterranean, the Tigris-Euphratic waters and the settlements which thrived along the shores of Ganga, Yamuna, Sindhu and Saraswati.[26] It has been time-and-again that this forward human leap had to be preceded by a mighty exodus of civilised races. Thus the history in this respect, has been repeating itself; and I think to complete the circle the 'history' has again put us on the exodus to give once again a great leap forward as we did in the recent past.

I think, this is the only call (or should I call it NAAD) of the hour for those who migrated due to the convulsions of History.

REFERENCES

1. Wushkar Baroque : Wushkar, a well-known village in Baramulla (Kashmir) on the bank of Vitasta where famous Buddhist Viharas had a massive facade 314 ft. long of terra-cotta creations depicting Bhuddha's life. In this the image of Bhuddha was 2 ½ times larger than normal human size. The style, now internationally known after the name of the village, is the culmination of Gandhara-Mathura style rendered with sensitive details (linear) of expression and decoration.
2. The name Shivji Raina is even now common name amongst Kashmiri Pandits. Phonologically, in Himachal Pahari Parlance 'Shiv' has been styled into 'Seu'.
3. The pilgrimage registers kept by Pandas at Haridwar, Kurukhestra and Pehowa do confirm and state as "Pandit Seu Raina of Guler".
4. First discoveries : W.G. Archer and Percy Brown.
5. Though in most inhospitable conditions, this biggest collection now lies in the Dogra Art Gallery of Jammu. Previous to the acquisition, this valuable collection remained as the personal property of one Pahda Kunj Lal, a descendent of the royal physicians of Basohli Rajas. It was in 1956 that a devastating fire in Basohli destroyed property of Hakim Pahda Kunjlal and thus he was compelled by circumstances to present the sizeable collection to the then Chief Minister of the State, Bakshi Gulam Mohmaed who came to visit the town. This valued collection was loaned by the Chief Minister for an exhibition of Festival of Kashmir of which myself and reputed Kashmir poet late Pandit Dinanath 'Nadim' were the organisers. I felt that This treasure should remain as a national treasure rather than a personal property. Pandit 'Nadim' and myself posed the problem to the then Education Minister Mr. G.M.

Sadiq who sorted out the matter with the Chief Minister who showed some displeasure but Mr. G.M. Sadiq got the collection entered as the national property.

6. Chandigarh Museum and Indian Museum Calcutta.
7. "Arts of India" - Victoria and Albert Museum.
8. This led to the foundation of Chambha School.
9. God is achieved not through austerities but through love.
10. "Notes on Pahari Painting" - by Gopi Krishna Kanoria (Rupa Lekha, AIFACS).
11. मानकुचित्रकर्त्ता should be taken as one word in which मानकु is the principal and चित्रकर्त्ता its agent denoting the gender. Its feminine would be चित्रकर्त्ता।
12. Collection of Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
13. Now the door-wings are in the collection of Bohri Singh Museum, Chambha.
14. 1764-94, rule of Raja Raj Singh of Chambha.
15. Bohri Singh Museum, Chambha.
16. Dr. Karan Singh Collection.
17. Dr. Karan Singh collection. Collection : Bohri Singh Museum of Chambha and the Punjab Museum, Chandigarh.
18. Kangra - Artists - Art and Letters, 1955, Vol. XXIX. No. 1.
19. Collection : Bharat Kala Bhawan, Banaras. "The Artist of the so-called Ranjha-Ramayana drawings" J.R.AS., Vol. XXI, No. 9.3-4, 1979.
20. In Kashmir, Papier-Mache professionals are still divided as खुहनगोरॅ and Nakash. The original लेखन (or = चित्रेलखन = Kashmiri लेखुन in which by practice ल becomes silent So.लेखन (Hindi) <लेखुन <खुहुन
21. "N.G. Mehta collection" by Khandalawala.
22. The "Ramayana Series", "The rape of Yadav women", the "Birth of Krishna" from Bhagwat folio and "Rukmini Parinaya" - all in the collection of Chandigarh Museum.

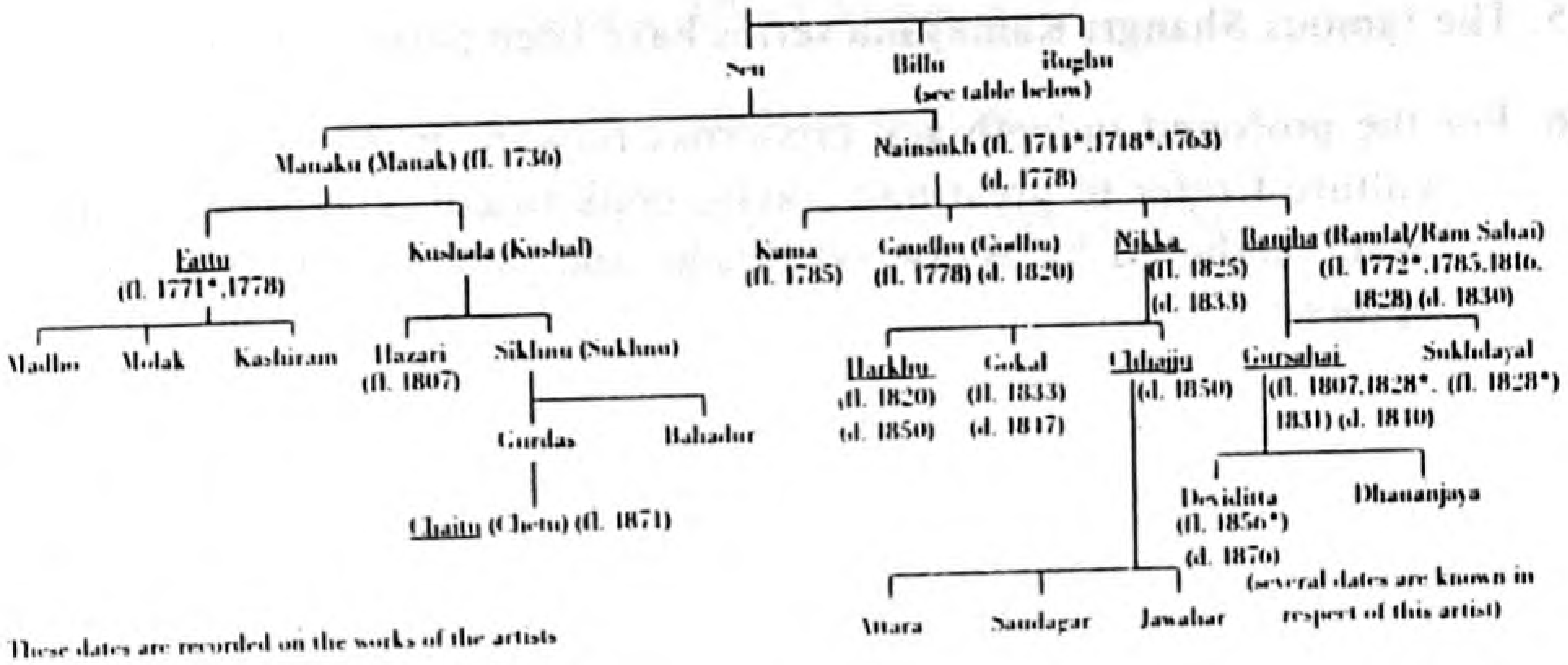
23. Godhu the second son of Nainsukh along with uncles Fatu and Khushala, took the Kangra influence in the principality.

24. Ram Dayal the great grandson of Nainsukh worked in the court of Raja Bijay Singh (1851) of Mandi.

25. The famous Shangri Ramayana series have been painted in this Kalam.

26. For the profound indepth and cris-cross forward movement of human culture I refer to great and classic book titled "The Martyrdom of Man" authored by Winwood Reade, and published first a century before.

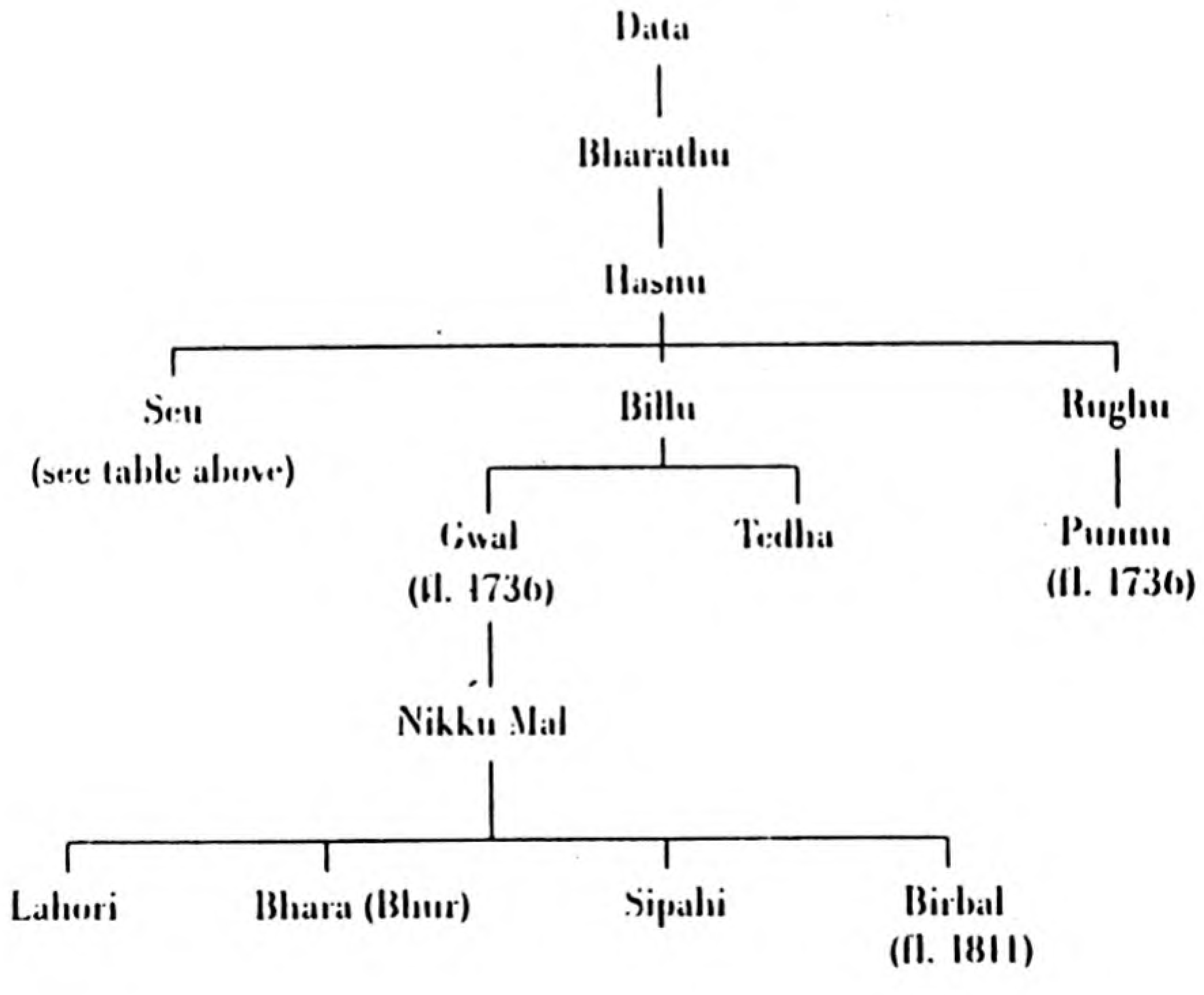
The Guller Painters of Pandit Seu's Family (worked in Guler and some other principalities)


Seu
Billu
Rughu
(see table below)
Manaku (Manak) (fl. 1736)
Nainsukh (fl. 1744*,1748*,1763) (d. 1778)
Fattu (fl. 1771*,1778)
Kushala (Kushal)
Kama (fl. 1785)
Gaudhu (Godhu) (fl. 1778) (d. 1820)
Nikka (fl. 1825) (d. 1833)
Ranjha (Ramlal/Ram Sahai) (fl. 1772*,1785,1816, 1828) (d. 1830)
Madho
Molak
Kashiram
Hazari (fl. 1807)
Sikhnu (Sukhnu)
Gurdas
Bahadur
Chaitu (Chetu) (fl. 1871)
Harkhu (fl. 1820) (d. 1850)
Gokal (fl. 1833) (d. 1847)
Chhajju (d. 1850)
Gursahai (fl. 1807,1828*, 1831) (d. 1840)
Sukhdayal (fl. 1828*)
Deviditta (fl. 1856*) (d. 1876) (several dates are known in respect of this artist)
Dhananjaya
Attara
Saudagar
Jawahar

* These dates are recorded on the works of the artists

Names in parentheses are those which appear in inscriptions or have been used by various scholars

Guler Painters - Descendants of Pandit Seu's Brothers, Billu and Rughu


Data
Bharathu
Hasnu
Seu
(see table above)
Billu
Rughu
Gwal (fl. 1736)
Tedha
Punnu (fl. 1736)
Nikku Mal
Lahori
Bhara (Bhur)
Sipahi
Birbal (fl. 1811)

Curtsey: Mārg Vol. 50, No.1, September 1998.

PART III

KASHMIRI HERITAGE

FESTIVALS AND CUSTOMS...

Kashmiri Pandits have their peculiar way of celebrating festivals like Navreh, Shivratri and Sonth.They have also evolved their own customs and traditions for performance of marriage, yagnopavit, death and other rituals. Everything has a distinct Kashmiri flavour.

CHPATER 10

ASPECTS OF KASHMIRI CULTURE

R. N. Bhat

INTORDUCTION OF AUTHOR

Dr. R.N. Bhat was born on 7th November 1956. He stood first in M.A. Linguistics from the Kurukshetra University in 1978 and was awarded a Silver Medal for this achievement. In 1983, he completed his PhD in Linguistics and in 1999 passed M.A. in Hindi from the same University.

He has been teaching in the Universities of Kurukshetra and Asmara and is currently Reader in Linguistics, Banaras Hindu University at Varanasi.

Dr. Bhat has written several books. Some of these are: Psycholinguistics: An Introduction, Bhasha Vijnan aur Hindi Bhasha, Prayojanamulak Hindi *and* Audio Cassette Course in Kashmiri *(as co-author). He has also written a number of research papers.*

BACKGROUND

Kashmiri Pandits have been a profoundly religious people; religion has played a pivotal role in shaping their customs, rituals, rites, festivals and fasts, ceremonies, food habits and the worship of their deities. Kashmir is widely known as the birth-place of 'Kashmir Shaivism' - a philosophy expounding the unity of Shiva and Shakti.

Hence, Shaiva bhakti and Tantra constitute the substratum of the ritualistic worship of Kashmiri Pandits on which the tall edifice of the worship of Vishnu (Krishna and Ram), Lakshmi and Saraswati, and a host of other deities has been built.

Kashmir has also been a great centre of learning for several centuries. It has been a major centre of Buddhist learning for nearly a millennium during which period a sizeable number of revered Kashmiri Buddhist scholars travelled as far as Sri Lanka in the South and Tibet and China in the North. The contribution of these scholars commands a place of pride in the extant Buddhist philosophy. Unfortunately, this tradition was brought to an almost abrupt end by the Pathan and Mongol invaders in the 14th century C.E.

Though the advent of Islam produced a clash of civilizations, it also brought into being a 'composite culture' in which saintly figures (Rshi, Pir, Mot, Shah) came to be revered and respected equally by the polytheistic Hindu as well as the monotheistic Muslim.

This journey through over three millennia has shaped the cultural moorings of the Kashmiri Pandit (KP hereafter) and provided him with a vast corpus of impressions and expressions, which have given him a distinct cultural identity.

Today the KP is on the crossroads, bewildered and baffled, homeless and nameless. His progeny is in a flux, unsure of its morrow and unaware of the traditions that its forefathers held dear to their hearts. This paper records some of the major socio-cultural beliefs, traditions, customs and festivals of the KP with the hope that the younger KP generation will know, learn, and comprehend the essence of KP culture which evolved long periods of peace and turmoil.

FESTIVALS AND FASTS

Festivals break the monotony of everyday work and provide the members of a community with an opportunity to feel cheerful, happy and relaxed. Hindu festivals have a deep spiritual import and religious significance and have also a social and hygienic element in them. On festival days people take an early morning bath and pray and meditate which gives them peace of mind and a new vigour.

In their lunar calendar KPs observe a number of festivals and fasts, most of which fall in the dark fortnight (Krishna paksh). The eighth (ashtami), eleventh (ekadashi) and fifteenth (Amavas/ purnima) days of both dark as well as bright fortnights, and the 4th day of the dark fortnights (Sankat Chaturthi) are considered so auspicious that people would observe fast on these days.

KP new- year *(Navreh)* begins on the first day of the bright fortnight of the month of Chaitra. On the eve of Navreh, a *thali* full of rice is decorated with fresh flowers, currency notes, pen and inkpot, curds, figurine/ picture of a deity and (dry) fruits. Early in the morning, the one who wakes up first (usually the lady of the house), sees this *thali* as the first object in the New Year and then takes it to all other members of the family, wakes them up to enable them to see the decorated *thali* before seeing anything else. This signifies a wish and hope that the new year would bring wisdom and blessing to every member of the family all through the year.

On the 3rd day of *Navreh,* the community members go out to nearby parks, temples, or outing spots to enable people to meet each other after nearly four months of snowy -winter. It is a social gathering where men, women and children put on their best attire to get ready for the new year chores. The eighth and the ninth days of the same fortnight are observed as Durga Ashtami and Ram Navami respectively. The fortnight marks the beginning of Spring, an important junction of climatic and solar influences. Durga Ashtami is celebrated to propitiate Shakti to seek her blessing and mercy. The eighth day of the dark fortnights of the Zyeshth and Ashar months are also celebrated with great devotion when people throng the Rajnya temple at Tulumula (Gandarbal), and Akingam, Lokutpur (Anantnag) to pray and worship Maa Shakti.

The 14th day of the bright fortnight of the Ashara month is specially dedicated to Jwalaji, the Goddess of fire. People in large numbers go to Khrew, 20 kms. from Srinagar and offer yellow rice and lamb's lung to the Goddess.

Purnima of the Shravana month is the day of Lord Shiva. On this day pilgrims reach the holy Amarnath cave to have a ' darshan' of the holy ice-lingam. People also go to Thajivor (near Bijbehara) to pray at the ancient Shiva temple there.

The sixth day of the dark fortnight of Bhadrapada is sacred to women. On this day, known as *Chandan Shashthi,* women observe a dawn to dusk fast and bathe sixty times during the day.

The eighth day of the dark fortnight of Bhadrapada is celebrated as the birthday of Krishna, the 8th incarnation of Lord Vishnu. On this day people sing in daintly decorated temples prayer songs in admiration of Lord Krishna. They do not eat solid food till midnight.

The Amavasya of the same fortnight is called *Darbi* Mawas. On this day the family Guru (purohit) brings *'Darab'* a special kind of grass, which is tied to the main entrance of the house.

The ashtami of the bright half of Bhadrapada is known as Ganga Ashtami. On this day people go on a pilgrimage to Gangabal. The 14th day of the same fortnight is called *'anta chaturdashi'*. On this day the family purohit brings *'anta'* a special thread which married women wear along with *"Atlhuur"*, a threaded bunch of silk tied to one's ear. The 'anta' is cleaned and worshipped like a 'Janev', the sacred thread worn by men. The 4th day of this fortnight is dedicated to Vinayak, the son of Shiva. Families prepare special sweet rotis known as *'pan'* on this day or during the remaining days of this fortnight. When the *pan* is ready, it is worshipped and the tale of its origin is recited by the eldest member of the family. The *rotis* are distributed among the neighbours and relations as *'pan naveed.'*

The dark half of Asoj is the fortnight of ancestors, *pitra paksh* (kaamblry pachh). During this fortnight people pay homage to their dead parents, grandparents, great grandparents by performing Shraadha and giving away rice, money, fruits, clothes and other things to the needy.

Mahanavami and Dussehra, marking Lord Rama's victory over the demon Ravana, fall on the 9th and 10th days of the bright half of Asoj. Episodes from Ramayana are enacted during this period.

Diwali the festival of lights falls on the 14th day of the dark half of the Kartika month. All the corners, windows, balconeys and eddies of the house are illuminated with lights. It is also believed that Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya on this day and Lord Krishna killed the demon Narakasura; hence, this day symbolizes the triumph of good over evil.

The third day of the bright half of Magara month is celebrated as the day of the 'Guru' *(Guru tritya).* Before the advent of Islam in Kashmir, scholars were awarded degrees to honour their academic achievements on this day (a precursor to present-day convocations). On this day the family purohit brings a picture of goddess Saraswati for a newborn baby or a new daughter-in-law in the family. On the Purnima of the same fortnight yellow rice *(tEhar)* is prepared early in the morning and served as *prasad* to children and adults in the family.

During the dark half of the month of Posh, the deity of the house is propitiated for seeking his blessings. The deity *(dayut)* is served rice and cooked and raw fish on any chosen day between the 1st and the fourteenth of the fortnight. On the day of the feast, called *Gadl batl* fish and rice is placed in the uppermost storey of the house late in the evening for the *dayut* who is expected to shower blessings on the family.

The Amawasya of the same fortnight is the auspicious day of *'Khetsi mavas',* when rice mixed with moong beans and other cereals is cooked in the evening to please the 'yaksha (Yachh) so that he casts no evil on the members of the family. The "cereal-rice ' *(yechha sot)* is placed at so a spot outside the house, believed to be the yaksha's place.

The 7th day of the dark half of the month of Marga is observed as the death anniversary of Mata *Roopabhawani* and the 11th day of the same fortnight is observed as *Bhimsen ekadashi.* It is believed, that from this day the earth begins to warm up and snow starts melting. The *purnima* of this month is celebrated as Kaw purnima, that is *crow's purnima.* On this day, the cup of a laddie like object, *Kavl potul*-crow's idol (a square front cup made of hay with a willow handle) is filled with a little rice and vegetables and the children of the family are made to go to the upper storey of the house and invite crows to the feast. The children invite the crows thus:

Kaavi batl kaavo khetsre Kaavo
YitI baa gangIbaII
Shraanaa dyaanaa kErith
Saanee navee laree
varee bataa khenee

Crow pandit-crow cereal- rice crow
come from Gangabal

bath meditation having done

to our new house
to eat cereal-rice

Shivratri *(herath)* is the most auspicious KP festival. Beginning on the first day of the dark half of Phalgun its celebration continues for twenty three days till the 8th day of the bright half of the same month. During this period the house is cleaned thoroughly for getting it ready for the marriage of Shiva and Parvati on the 13th day of the dark fortnight.

The 13th is the wedding night when *watukh,* Shiva in bachelor as well as in bridegroom forms, is worshipped along with the bride Parvati, Kapaliks, Shaligram till late in the night. Watukh, that is, 'Shiva's marriage party, is worshipped for four days, upto the 1st day of the bright half of the month. On this day, watukh is cleaned *(parmuuzun> panmarjan)* of all the flower petals etc. at a tap in the compound of the house. Then it is taken back into the house where the eldest lady of the house bolts the entrance-door from inside. The members carrying the watukh knock at the door and the following exchange of words takes place :

Kus chuu?
Who is there ?
Ram broor
Ram the cat
Kyaa heth ?
what have you brought with you?
arnn, dan, gury-gupan, or zuu,
With food, money, cattle, good health,
caan- myaan ti tini haha
and offspring.

At the end of the watakh puja shivratri prasad in the form of kernels of walnut and roti made from rice flour is distributed amongst neighbours and relatives. The distribution of the prasad is completed before the 8th day of the bright half.

The 11th day of the bright fortnight marks the beginning of *sonth* 'Spring. On the eve of *Sonth, a thali* full office is decorated as on the new-year eve to be seen as the first thing on the morning of ekadashi.

RITUALS AND RITES

The domestic rites and rituals among the Hindus are popularly known as *Karma* and *Samkara.* In the form of Karmas they are cherished as programmes of duty to be observed by all householders and as Sanskaras, these enable the devotee to make their observance rhythmical. The rites and rituals serve the external and internal modes of purity *(Shuci> Shruuts).* Together they constitute certain ceremonies beginning with the *Garbhadhaana* or the rite of impregnation and ending with the *anteshti* or the funeral rite including *Shraddha.* These can be divided into pre-natal, natal, post-natal, prenuptial, nuptial, post-nuptial, pre-obituary, obituary, and post-obituary.

MARRIAGE

Hindu marriage is not a social contract but a religious institution, a sacrament in which besides the bride and the groom, there is a spiritual or divine element on which the permanent relationship between the husband and the wife depends. The husband and the wife are responsible not only to each other, they also owe allegiance to the divine element. This mystic aspect of Hindu marriage necessitates a number of symbols. The marriage creates a new bond between the bride and the groom. They have to rear up this union by dedicating their entire energy in the direction of their common interest and ideal.

Marriage is possible only between those families which have had no kinship for seven generations on the paternal side and four generations on the maternal side. Once the boy and the girl consent to join as man and wife in a lifelong bond, their parents meet in a temple in the company of the middleman (if there is any) and some select family members from both the sides to vow that they would join the two families in a new bond of kinship.

This ritual is known as *Kasam-drly.* This is followed by a formal engagement ceremony *(taakh)* in which some members of the groom's family and relatives visit the bride's place to partake of a rich feast. The party brings a Saree and some ornaments, which the bride is made to wear by her would be sister-in-law. During this ceremony, the two parties exchange flowers and vow to join the two families through wedlock. A younger brother or sister of the bride accompanies the groom's party with a gift of clothes for the groom.

After this function the two families begin to make preparations for the marriage ceremony which is held an some auspicious day after consultating a purohit.

Several rituals are associated with marriage whose observance begins nearly a week before the wedding day. The bride's family begins with what is known as *'Garlnavai'* (literally : *"get madeup")* when the hair of the bride are let loose. This is followed by *mall mEEnZ* or *saatl mEEnz* (first henna or auspicious henna) when henna is applied to the bride and the groom by their respective mothers and aunts. These rituals are attended by near relatives and neighbours. *MEEnzyraath* (henna night) is the first major event when all the relatives-men, women and children in the extended families-assemble at the girl's and the boy's respective places. This is a night of much rejoicing and feasting. The evening meal is followed by a series of ceremonial acts. Henna is pasted on the hands and feet of the bride and the groom in their respective places and almost every young boy and all women and girls paste henna on their hands and elderly women sing traditional songs. Before pasting henna, maternal aunt *(maami)* washes the feet and hands of the bride and the groom, and the paternal aunt *(bua)* applies henna, and the maternal aunt *(maasi)* burns incence to ward off evil. Meanwhile women, girls and boys sing traditional ditties as well as popular songs appropriate to the occasion.

While the singing, and henna pasting is on the bride as well as the groom are given a thorough bath *(kani shraan)* by aunts and sisters -in-law to prepare them for *Devgun,* the entrance of Devtas. After the ceremonial bath the boy and the girl wear clothes brought by their respective maternal uncles. The bride is made to wear 'dejhuur'-a gold ornament, and *kalpush-a.* variety of headgear.

Dejhuur is tied to a gold chain known as *'aTh'* which is provided by the groom's family on the wedding day to complete the holy alliance between Shiva, - the groom, and Parvati, -the bride.

'Devgurn is the religious ritual performed after the bath. The family purohit performs a small yajna on this occasion. 'Devgun', it is believed, transforms the bride and the groom into 'Devtas'.

On the wedding day the groom wears a colourful dress with a saffron - coloured turban on his head. He is made to stand on a beautifully made rangoli *(vyug)* in the front compound of the house where parents, relatives and friends put garlands made of fresh plucked flowers, of cardamom and currency notes round the groom's neck. A cousin holds a flower-decked umbrella to protect the groom against evil. Conch-shells are blown, ditties are sung and the groom's party moves towards the bride's place usually in cars and other modes of transport.

Conch-shells announce the arrival of the groom and his party at the bride's place where the lane leading to the main entrance to the house is beautifully decorated with colourful flowers and dyed saw-dust. Upon entering the compound of the bride's house, the groom is welcomed by traditional songs sung by the bride's relations. He is put on a *rangoli* where the bride draped in a colourful silk Saree is made to stand beside him on his left side. There is another round of garlanding from the girl's relatives. Then the mother of the bride comes with a *thali* of small lighted lamps made of kneaded rice flour and an assortment of sweets and makes the groom and the bride eat from the same piece of sweet a couple of times. After this the bride is taken back into the house and the groom is made to stand at the main door of the house for a short *dvaar puja,* 'door-prayer'. The groom's party joins the bride's relatives in a very rich feast. Meanwhile the bride and the groom are seated in a beautifully decorated room for a series of rituals and ceremonies amidst chanting of Sanskrit mantras for several hours with little breaks in between. During these ceremonies, the bride is supported by her maternal uncle. The purohits of the two families recite mantras and make the bride, groom and their parents to perform a number of rituals with fire *(agni)* as the witness. The boy and the girl take seven rounds of the *agni-kund* 'spring of fire' and vow to live together in prosperity and adversity, in joy as well as in sorrow, till they are separated by death. '*Lagan*, as this ceremony is called, is followed by *"posh puja"* 'showering of flowers' in which a red shawl is spread over the bride and the groom, held at four edges by four people, and amidst recitation of *shlokas* all the elderly people shower flowers on the two 'devtas'. After this ceremony the bride and the groom are taken to the kitchen and made to eat from the same plate.

A *rangoli* is laid in the compound and the bride and the groom stand on it. Now the bride joins the groom to the groom's place where yet another *rangoli is* laid and the bride and the groom are made to stand on it. Here the groom's party relaxes and the bride is made to wear '*aTh*', the gold chain which is attached to *dejhuur.* Her hair and head-gear *(tarangl)* are tied and she is made to wear a saree given to her the groom's family.

After this they return to the bride's place with a small party comprising the groom's father, brothers, sisters, brothers-in-law, and a couple of friends. As a member of her new family she is now a guest at her parent's place. The groom's party asks the bride's parents to send her (the bride) to her family (the in-laws). After a little tea, the party leaves for the groom's place. A younger brother/ sister/cousin of the bride accompanies the party to the groom's place. On the next day or a couple of days later depending upon the *mahuurat* (auspicious day), the newly married couple visit the wife's parents. This visit is known as *'satraath* or *'phirl saal.* Upon reaching the wife's parent's place, the man and wife are welcomed with *aalath* - a thali with water, rice, coins and flowers.

The nuptials in their utterances, promises, and hopes symbolize a great social transition in the life of the bride and the bridegroom. They have to earn their own livelihood, procreate children and discharge their obligations towards Gods, parents, children and other creatures of the world. The nuptial ceremonies these address all aspects of married life: biological, physical, and mental.

During the first year after marriage the girl's parents send gifts to the groom's place on a number of occasion in the form of cash, clothes, sweets, fruits, and cooked food. Gifts are sent on the birthdays of the groom, the bride, and groom's parents; prasad in the form of wanlnuts and baked bread etc. on Shivratri *(herlts boog);* fruits, sweets etc. on Janamashtami and Diwali; *pulaav* etc. on *KhetsI maavas;* During the month of Magar a special ceremony known as *shishur* is solemnized when the bride is provided with a special *kangri-a* brazier used during winter, and *shishur (til* seeds wrapped in a piece of silk) is tied on her upper garment. On this day, near relatives, especially women, of the groom's family are invited and the girl's parents send gifts in the form of clothes, cash, to their daughter.

LaTh moklaavIn

During her first pregnancy, the girl's parents invite her to their home, and after a little puja, she is made to wear a new headgear *(tarangI).* Then accompanied by a sister/cousin, she goes back to her home with milk, clothes, cash, baked bread and other gifts.

SONDAR

On the seventh day after delivery, the mother and the baby are given a hot bath. Special vegetarian/nonvegetarian dishes are prepared on the occassion. Pieces of paper *(burzI)* are burnt in an earthen plate and circled thrice round the heads of the mother and the baby to ward off evil. Seven plates of special food are served to the paternal aunts of the baby. This is exclusively a women's ceremony. On this day the mother's parents send *'trIy phot'* (wife's basket) which contains clothes, rotis, sugar, spices, cash for the newborn, and its parents and grandparents.

KahnethIr

This is the religious ceremony of purification. On the 11th day after childbirth, a small 'hawan' is performed in the house and a *tilak* is applied on the forehead of the newborn. The baby's maternal grandparents send clothes on the occasion. This ends *hontsh* (impure effect) in the family.

On the 12th day the baby is put on a rangoli laid in the house - threshold (porch) and a piece of sweet is touched to its lips, the family elders shower blessings on the baby. The baby and the mother visit its maternal grandparents where they may stay for a few days. On their return, the grandparents send baked items mutton preparations, curds, milk and clothes for the baby, its parents and paternal grandparents.

MEKHLAA

In the past the sacred thread ceremony of boy was performed when he would become seven years old, i.e. when he would be able to wash the sacred thread *(jeniiv, yonyi)* and recite the "Gayatri Mantra". Usually, all the boys in the family are made to wear the sacred thread together in a single ceremony. Mekhla or yajnopavit involves all the ceremonies and rituals, like *mEEnzy raath, devgun* etc. associated with a marriage ceremony. After *Devgun* the boys', called *'Meekhli-mahaaraazI*-(mekhla grooms), heads are shaven and they are made to wear saffron-coloured robes.

Mothers, and paternal aunts wear red and white thread *(nEEryvan)* on their ears and a huge *'agni-kund'* is prepared where seven purohits recite vedic mantras for nearly 12 hours and ghee, jaggery, rice and paddy are constantly poured into the agni-kund to please the devtas and seek their blessing. For the whole day relatives and friends come to this *'hawan pandal'* and the eldest of the *mekhla grooms* begs of them to give *Dakshina* (offerings) for the gurus (the purohits), which the visitors are pleased to give him dakshina (known as *Ebiid).* Towards the evening the family - purohit asks the father of the mekhla grooms to put the sacred thread on them. This is a very emotional moment for the purohits as well as the father, the members of the family, and relatives. The chanting of mantras rises to the highest pitch and the mekhla-grooms are made to wear the sacred thread, -- marking their entrance into the pure brahmanical fold. This begins their brahmachari period, the first stage of Hindu life, when they seek only knowledge and wisdom. After this the Guru (family-purohit) whispers the Gayatri Mantra into the ears of the mekhla grooms. They are directed to recite this mantra every morning after taking a bath.

Once the yajna is concluded the maternal uncle(s) of the mekhla-grooms takes for them to go to a nearby temple. Meanwhile *prasad* in the form of rice, cereals, vegetables is served to all the relatives and friends including the mekhla grooms, and their parents who observe a fast for the whole day.

The next day *(Koshalhuum)* is observed as a day of feasting when mutton preparations are served. A day or two later, depending upon the position of the planets, sweet rice *(khiir)* is prepared and a small *puja* held. After this the mekhla-grooms are made to put on a new sacred thread and the mothers and the aunts remove the nEEryvan. Bring to an end the rituals connected with the yajnopavit ceremony.

DEATH RITES

When a person breathes his/her last, his/her mortal remains are washed in water to which Ganga jal is added. Cotton buds are put into his/her ears and nostrils. A coin is placed at its lips. The whole body is covered in a white shroud and tied with a thread *(nEEryvan)*. The body is then placed on a plank of wood and four persons take the coffin on their shoulders to the cremation ground. The eldest son of the deceased carries an earthen pitcher in his hand and leads the coffin. Some distance away from the cremation ground, the coffin is placed on the ground and the family members, relatives and friends are allowed to have a last glimpse of the deceased's face. The coffin is then taken to the cremation ground and put on a pyre. The eldest son, after taking three rounds around the pyre the eldest son lights it. From second to the 9th day of one's death, his/her eldest son and daughter come out on to the house threshold before sunrise and call upon their departed father/mother a couple of times, asking him:

Boch maa lEju baboo mEEje !
Are you hungry father/mother ?
Treesh maa lEju baboo mEEje !
Are you thirsty father/ mother ?
TIIr maa lEjii baboo mEEje!
Are you feeling cold father/ mother ?

On the fourth day of cremation the sons and some relatives and family friends go to the cremation ground to gather ashes *(EsrakI)*. Most of it are immersed into a nearby river/stream and a part are put into an earthen pitcher and taken to Haridwar for immersion into the holy Ganges.

On the 10th day, the sons of the deceased along with many relatives and the family purohit go to a river bank where sons' heads are shaved and a Shraadha is performed. The relatives after having lunch leave the family of the deceased alone. On the 11th day, the sons and daughters perform a very elaborate shraadha under the guidance of a purohit. The ceremony ends with *aahuuti* given to *agni* invoking almost all the deities, major rivers, temple towns, mountains, and lakes of South Asia. On this day the daughters too pay *dakshina* to the purohit and arrange food for the families of their brothers.

On the same day, 'oil' is provided for the deceased *(tiil dyun)* in which mustard oil is poured into a large number of earthen lamps and cotton wicks are immersed and lighted in them. Favourite vegetarian foods are prepared in the name of the deceased. Burning of oil lamps is meant to provide light to the deceased in the 'other' world.

Another Shraadha is held on the 12th day after death. This marks the end of the mourning. When married daughters return to their homes.

During the first three months a shraadha is performed after every fifteen days i.e. on the 30th, 45th, 60th, 75th and 90th day of death. An elaborate sharaadha is held on the 180th day *(Shadmoos)*, 6th month. The shraadha on the first death anniversary (vEharvEED) too is an elaborate one. Daughters and sons and their husbands/ wives assemble to perform both shadmoos and vEharvEED.

After this a shraadha is done every year on the death anniversary and one during the pitra-paksh. The children (sons and daughters) offer water to their deceased parents and three generations of grandparents every morning.

LANGUAGE AND FOOD

KP has been a polyglot throughout the known history. Besides mother tongue (Kashmiri) it has had a sound knowledge of Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu-Hindi, and English at different periods in history. Literatures of these languages are a testimony to their genius and creativity. Their original contributions in the areas of philosophy, theology, aesthetics, logic, grammar, astronomy etc. occupy a place of pride in the extant literatures of these disciplines.

KP loves vegetarian foods yet mutton and fish have been its favourite. Rice and knolkhol *(haakh-batl)* has been its primary requirement. The use of a wide variety of spices, e.g., aniseed powder, turmeric powder, chilly powder, ginger powder, black-pepper, cardamom, saffron etc., is very common among the KPs. Besides knolkhol KP relishes beans, potato, spinach, lotus-stalk, sonchal, raddish, turnip, cabbage, cauliflower, wild mushroom cheese, and an assortment of local greens like *liisl, vopal haakh, nunar, vosti haakh, hand.* The major mutton preparations of the KP include : *kEliyi, roganjosh, matsh, kabar gah, yakhlny, ristl, tabakh naaTI, tsok tsarwan* etc.

TO CONCLUDE

After the advent of Islam in the Valley, when Persian replaced Sanskrit as the language of administration, senior members of the pandits (a large majority had been forced to embrace Islam) organized a kind of a conference to deliberate on and find means to preserve their religion and culture so as to prevent it from becoming extinct. In that historic conclave, it was decided that in order to participate in State administration, it were necessary to learn Persian, so the son's son would learn the language of administration and the daughter's son, if he were educated by his maternal grandparents, would learn *bhasha* 'Sanskrit' and religious scriptures and eventually perform religious rites and rituals. Thus, two distinct sects, one of *bhasha Pandits* or purohits 'clergymen' and another of the *karkun* 'the men of administration' were created. In course of time the Purohit became dependent upon the Karkun for dakhshinaa 'offerings' to make his living and the Karkun came to be considered a superior class to the men of religion. This historic 'decision' has brought the community to an impasse now where the *purohits* too hair diminished in number and the very identity of the community is at stake. At this juncture, it is not only the religious rites and rituals, customs, festivals and ceremonies, beliefs, myths and superstitions that are under threat of extinction, but also their mother tongue, which was not under threat during the Muslim period.

The community elders need to sit together again to think about its linguistic and cultural heritage and evolve a strategy to preserve it. Otherwise, the literary and religious writings of Laleshwari, Parmanand, Zinda Koul will have no takers in near future.

OUR EMINENT SCHOLARS...

Even in recent times, we have had eminent Kashmiri scholars well versed in Sanskrit and Sharada, who collaborated with foreign scholars in deciphering ancient manuscripts. But it seems that the link with the past is now in imminent danger of being snapped, unless the present generation fulfils its duty of preserving and passing on the cultural legacy it has inherited from its forbears.

CHAPTER 11

OUR CULTURAL LEGACY

S. N. Pandita

INTRODUCTION OF AUTHOR

S.N. Pandita was born in the sixth decade of the last century and is the grandson of Prof. Nityanand Shastri, acclaimed as the 'Crest jewel among the scholars of Kashmir' by Sir Aurel Stein.

He has written numerous papers on the cultural heritage of Kashmiri Pandits and participated in more than 40 conferences and seminars. He has authored a book titled "Western Indologists and Sanskrit Savants of Kashmir", which has mapped the interface of scholarship between Western and Kashmiri intellectuals.

He has received an international award from Shugden Tibetan International Society and Alisha Award from Alisha Trust, for excellence in research in the area of cultural heritage.

He has scripted and co-directed a number of films like "A Pilgrimage to Kailash-Mansarovar", "Cosmic Rhythms in Divine Abodes" and "Amarnath—the God of Immortality".

He is the founder-Secretary of the Nityanand Shastri Kashmir Research Institute and Editor of the KECSS Newsletter.

"All of us, I suppose, have varying pictures of our native land and no two persons will think exactly alike. When I think of India, I think of many things and above all of the Himalayas, snow capped, or serene mountain valleys in Kashmir in the spring, covered with new flowers and with a brook bubbling and gurgling through it. We make and presume the picture of our choice and so I have chosen this mountain background from Kashmir rather than the more normal picture of hot subtropical part of our country", wrote Jawahar Lal Nehru in The Discovery of India.

Walled off by high mountains and endowed with unequalled natural beauty, Kashmir remained an inviolate sanctuary of Indian culture, till atleast the 14th century. Budhism,Saivism and Sanskrit learning flourished in the valley and produced a remarkably rich culture till the Muslim conquest overturned social structure of Kashmir. From atleast third century B.C., Kashmir played a very important part in Indian historical development.

Though it was but seldom till the time of the Moghuls that the plains of India politically dominated the Kashmir uplands and equally it was only on rare occasions that the kings of Kashmir tried to penetrate into the plains, yet the cultural, religious and literary life of the valley has been closely integrated with the life of rest of India. Situated on the borders of Central Asia and always in close contact with the steppe civilizations of the region it became early in its history the organised base from which Indian civilisation spread into vast territories of this geographical area.

The integration of Kashmir life was so complete that though Kshemendra who himself was a Saivite produced a great work on the *Avadans* of the Budha, a classic in Buddhist Literature. But equally important indeed, so far as India is concerned, much more far reaching has been the development of *Advaita Saivism* in Kashmir.

The *Trika Sasana* associated with Vasugupta and Kallata seem to have arisen in the 9th century and may have been the result of great Shankaracharya's visit to Kashmir. The monism of *Trika Sasana* is a remarkable instance of *Advaita Vedanta's* influence on earliest religio-philosophical system of Samkara. The Kashmir *Tantrism* on *Kaula marga* also take on this monism and combines forms of Devi worship with the texts of *Advaita*. The influence of *Kaula* form of worship is felt even now in every part of India from far of Kerala in South to the Himalayan valleys in the North and can claim to be one of the most profound contribution of Kashmir to the life of India.

So far Sanskrit Literature is concerned apart from *alamkara sastras* in which Kashmiris have excelled, the names of Somadeva, Kshemendra, Damodargupta, Bilhana and Kalhana stand out as brilliant galaxy of genius adding lustre to the great legacy of history of Sanskrit Literature. Somadeva's *Kathasaritasagara* one of the undisputed master pieces of the world may well be claimed to be the epic of middle classes and compensate for the loss of Gunadhya's original work. Kshemendra was perhaps the most comprehensive mind of his time who wandered into every field including satire and it is almost unnecessary to eulogise the great importance of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini.* Thus atleast till the Muslim conquest of the valley, Kashmir could claim to have been in the vanguard of Indian culture with notable contributions to every aspect of Indian life.

Subsequent happenings of history in Kashmir led to a kind of dormancy if not a total decline to this cascading and continual flow of cultural legacy. For about 600 years as an old people worried and wearied by domestic trails and tribulation and considerations of matters both mundane and intellectual, Pandits of Kashmir suffered the inability to potray the gifts of their attainments to the world. For a long time Pandits had nothing but some shreds of their past memories, some dim recollections of what they were and what they did by their genius.

So said Pandit Anand Kaul, a pioneer of modern research in the history and folklore of Kashmir during the first quarter of the 20th century, "Kashmir the home of Kashmiri Pandits is linked with history full of misty past infinitely remote. They are among the few races whose traditions run back to gods and divine origin of things. The happy valley of Kashmir is land of vistas, so lavish in its prospect and surpassing interest and beauty, a land where wonderful contrast and amazing variety can be seen, a land of the utmost miracles of bountiful nature. This marvellous and magnificent paradise of world, this splendid haunt of security and joy which no words can reproduce, in which one may see as much poetic beauty as any man has right to look for, is the home of Brahmins."

A generation earlier towards the third quarter of the 19th century, Pandit Damodar, one of the most learned Sanskrit scholars of modern Kashmir in a fine Sanskrit verse said. "Here gods live resplendent gratifying their desire, the climate is delightful. Here all the senses are gratified and enjoy peace. Feats of things worth searching after together with riches are obtainable, the inhabitants are learned. Such being the country of Kashmir, does it not excel the beauty of heaven of Indra".

Perhaps nothing may excel the expressions of these two worthy natives of Kashmir about the genre of Pandits and their habitat. Even though what they have said is recent, it is perhaps the appreciation of their expression that has echoed centuries earlier to attract the attention of visitors from outside. And very obviously Kashmir with its bewitching lakes, flowers, rivers, snow-capped mountains and ancient shrines and monuments tempted a large number of Western travellers, officials and adventurers to write about its natural beauty and salubrious climate. These Westerners wrote only about the physical charms of Kashmir. Evidently Western perception of Kashmir during 18th and until the middle of 19th century was a lot about the body and very little about its soul. Such versions came from Vigne, Lawrence, Younghusband, Neve and Miline. However the lacuna, was compensated by Western scholars like Buhler, Stein, Grierson and many others. They gave us glimpses of treasures of Kashmir and its enormous contribution to Sanskrit language and literature besides to the very own language of Kashmir - the Kashmiri.

For the wealth of its own soul, West wanted to know every thing and exploit that lay within the range of their intellect. The curiosity and spirit of enquiry, this intellectual urge of the West was contagious and it was transmitted as a matter of fact to the Kashmiri Pandits also. For the latter it also became a great mental tonic and spiritual force to awaken and rejuvenate their intellectual sense. The greatest benefit the Pandits in Kashmir have received was the opportunity of an interface that occured between Pandit scholars and Western indologists between 1875 and 1940 in assessing the rich wealth of Kashmir's history language and literature.

The patronage successive Dogra kings of Jammu & Kashmir lent to scholarship enabled them to write a glorious record of Indological studies in Kashmir. Perhaps there are few equivalent parallels in the contemporary history of India about the patronage successive rulers of Royal dynasty accorded to scholarship and spread of learning and education as the Dogra dynasty did to promote Kashmiri and Western scholarship. The record however has remained abjectly an undocumented history so far. No account of this interface is found in any modern work of Kashmir's literary history barring an account about a name here or there or a line here or there.

This period of interface produced some of the immotals of Oriental studies among the Western scholars and who could not have attained the pinnacle of their literacy glory but for the cooperation, able guidance and collaboration of their counterparts in Pandit scholars. Here one can not fail to appreciate that this interface gave insights into the rich treasures of Pandits vast literary wealth and opened to the world one of the richest reserves of ancient knowledge and wisdom.

The credit for this appreciation doubtless goes to Western scholars and immortalising some of the Indologists and Orientalists, credit genuinly passes on to Pandit scholars whose collaboration coupled with high erudition and without clamouring for laurels served the best interest of Indological studies with the sole aim to further scholarship in its highest tradition and through purest pusuits. This fact also makes it a high point of literary history of Kashmir in modern times. The interface also bridges Pandits to the glory of their past achievements and deserving claims.

INTERFACE OF SCHOLARSHIP

To recall and unfold so far unaccounted details of this literary history of Kashmir in a way is to pay tribute to that era of ressurgence. And equally befitting it would be to recall the roll call of the honoured list. The patrons are Maharaja Ranbir Singh, Maharaja Pratap Singh, Raja Amar Singh and Maharaja Hari Singh. The known icons of the Western scholarship are Professor George Buhler, Sir Aurel Stein, Sir George Grierson, Dr. David. Brainerd Spooner, Professor Sten Konow, Dr. Eugen Hultzsch, Professor J. Ph. Vogel, Professor Maurice Winternitz, Dr. Carl Kellor, Dr. K. de. Vreese, Sir John Marshall and Professor Franklin Edgerton. The barely known Kashmiri scholars are Pandit Govind Kaul, Pandit Damodar, Pandit Sahib Ram, Pandit Sahaz Bhat, Professor Nityanand Shastri, Pandit Mukand Ram Shastri, Pandit Anand Kaul, Pandit Ishwar Kaul and Professor Jagdhar Zadoo.

Soon after his accession to the throne in the year 1857 Maharaja Ranbir Singh consecrated a shrine to the worship of Rama from whom according to Dogra tradition the house of Jammu Raja's claim descent. Maharaja provided rich endownments for founding and maintenance of such religious institutions. Among these institutions a Pathshala or college, a library of Sanskrit works were the foremost objects of the Maharaja's care. Maharaja's desire was to revive the study of Vedic texts which in his dominions as well as in the Punjab had practically ceased for centuries. Collection of manuscripts began in the very first year of Maharaja's reign. Competent teachers were drawn to the Raghunath Temple and the Library and whose name worth to be recorded were Pandit Goukulachandra, the learned Head of the Temple school, Pandit Durgaprasad of Jaipur, Rassamohan Bhattacharya from Bengal, Pandit Dilaram and Pandit Bhaskara. As Maharaja Ranbir Singh resolved upon the expansion of the Raghunath Temple Library, collection of Sanskrit works and manuscripts from different parts of India started. Maharaja ordered this to the care of Pandit Asananda.

With the progress of Raghunath Temple Library collection, first European interests were drawn towards this treasure. Rudolph von Roth Professor of Antiquities at the University of Vienna came to know of a unique Vedic manuscript, an unkown version of the Atharvaveda to exit in Kashmir. Through scholarly and quasi-official channels he persuaded the British authorities in India to try and locate it in Kashmir. After many years it was obtained by Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1875 who sent the birch bark original manuscript to Sir William Mueir. The Governor was non plussed when the object of negotiation was handed to him, a messy bundle of grimy tattered 287 pieces of birch bark leaves held by a chord passing through the centre. An urgent telegram was sent to George Buhler, then Professor of Oriental Languages in Bombay to come to the Viceregal mansion. One look at the manuscript, convinced Buhler that it needed a washing. Reassuring Sir William that the ink used would not be effected. He laundered the same in his bathroom. The manuscript restored by the act earned Buhler the admiration of Governor. Maharaja Ranbir Singh had obtained this unique manuscript from Pandit Dayaram Jyotshi through the persuation of Keshav Bhat Zadoo. George Bhuler further worked in Kashmir during 1875 and collected more than 300 manuscripts, many of them in Sharada script written on birch bark leaves with the assistance and help of Pandit Damodar under the kind order of Maharaja.

Of Damodar's erudition Bhuler remarked that he was a learned scholar "who seemed to shake Sanksrit verse and prose out of his sleeves." He wished "I had such teachers in the Oriental College". George Bhuler looked out to search the most original manuscript of *Rajatarangini* that he called Codex - archetypus which was then retained by the learned Kashmiri Pandit Sivaram whose family alone in Kashmir had always preserved a copy of the Royal chronicle. Bhuler endeavoured to obtain it. He was permitted only a glimpse before the owner took the manuscript away. There his good fortune deserted him. He left Kashmir in December 1875 At Vienna his student Aurel Stein heard this story from Bhuler himself. Stein followed Bhuler's example and arrived in Kashmir on August 12, 1888 thirteen years after the departure of his teacher.

Only one flaw marred the excitement of the first visit to Kashmir. He could not lay his hands upon the Codex - archetypus of *Rajatarangini.* It was a year later in 1889 under the direction of Maharaja, the Governor, Dr. Suraj Kaul obtained the complete manuscript of *Rajatarangini* for Stein's use. The Darbar arranged for the assistance of Kashmiri scholars, Govind Kaul and Mukandram to assist Aurel Stein in the edition and translation of *Rajatarangini* which took, in Stein's own words "eleven years of committed friendship and exacting scholarship of my Kashmiri colleagues". Their commitment to scholarship brought with it lasting friendship too.

In Stein's second holiday trip to Jammu, the manuscript library of Raghunath Temple comprising of about 8000 manuscripts was opened for Stein's access by the order of Maharaja on 19th October, 1889. On Stein's recommendation the catalogue work was entrusted to Pandit Govind Kaul and Pandit Sahaz Bhat who were provided with the services of six copyists also. Alongside, Aurel Stein studied ancient geography of Kashmir during the summer seasons of 1888, 1889, 1891, 1892 and 1894 and in shorter visits during 1895 and 1896 with the help of Pandit Govind Kaul and Pandit Chand Ram. All these great indological works, the edition of *Rajatarangini,* the motif of which had three movements in Stein's hand namely the Sanskrit edition in 1892, English translation and commentary in 1900 intervened with publication of Ancient Geography of Kashmir in 1896.

Paying fulsome tribute to Pandit Govind Kaul and Pandit Mukandram for their help, Stein recorded, "I am indebited to both the scholars for much information and explanation on Kashmirian topics without which correct comprehension of Kalhan's text was unattainable." For Pandit Damodar, Stein said, "he was the facile princep among the scholars of Kashmir and had set himself the task to continue Rajatarangini from the time of Akbar to his own and from what I have seen of the parts composed, Kalhana could have found generations past no worthier successor" Regretably Pandit Damodar died in 1892.

While Aurel Stein was still engaged in his Kashmir labours between 1888 to 1900 he had already become the greatest Western patron of Kashmiri Pandits and drew attention of Irish linguist George Grierson to Pandit Ishwar Kaul's Kashmiri grammar the *Kashmirishabdamrit* which the former edited in 1898 and was published by Asiatic Society of Bengal. Of this work Grierson observed, "It appeared as if written by Hemmachandra himself. All I did was to correct only the slips and errors of pen." Towards the end of 1900 Stein shifted the field of his work to Central Asian explorations but he was already a pivot in the interface which was to become more racy in the subsequent decades of 20th century between Kashmiri and Western scholars.

In July 1900 Aurel Stein recommended the Dutch indologist J. Ph. Vogel to Kashmiri scholar Pandit Nityanand. Their exacting studies in the field of epigraphy connected with Sharada inscriptions on rock in Chamba valley led to the discovery and assessment of the earliest 10th century record of Kashmiri script. The work is well known world over as Antiquities of Chamba which appeared in 1913. Of Pandit Nityanand's assistance and help Vogel observed that "he was a scholar who dispelled *avidya* and who had mastered all the *shastras* and whose knowledge of sciences had reached the other end of ocean.' He acknowledged that how grateful he was to fate that Nityanand was acknowledged his teacher as well as friend. He called him "*Hanumana* who could cross the ocean with his *Shastrik* knowledge." Their long friendship lasted more than four decades.

As Stein shifted his field of studies to Central Asia, A.W. Straton took the Registrarship of Punjab University Lahore in 1900, a tenure which he occupied just for two years that followed his ultimately death in Gulmarg in 1902. Earlier Straton had come in contact with Kashmiri scholars like Pandit Harabhat, Pandit Nityanand and Pandit Mukandram. He exchanged lot of correspondence with these Kashmiri scholars which bore the wealth of literary interactions. Subsequently Straton's widow Anna Booth through the efforts of Vogel collected all the Sanskrit letters that her husband A.W. Straton had written to and received from Kashmiri scholars to make a book. This book was published in London in the year 1908 under the title "Letters from India". The English translation of Sanskrit letters was done by Maurice Bloomfield the famous author of Vedic Concordance. It is pertinent to record that Bloomfield was Guru of 20th century's greatest linguist Noam Chomsky, who for the future generations will be what Descrates, Mozart, Newton, Galelio and Frued have been to ours. With Bloomfield's translation of Sanskrit letters making the content of the book, it is however sad that the work is practically unknown in India and in particular to Kashmir intelligensia and more sadly even a copy of it is believed to be not available at present in India.

In the year 1905 Harvard scholar David Spooner visited Kashmir and came in "contact with Nityanand, Hara Bhat and Mukandram. This interaction led to spread of Sanskrit studies at Harvard University in America and perhaps is the earliest event when Sanskrit learning began in America. Nityanand wrote a four volume commentary and translation of *Jaitariya Upanishad* which found its place in the Harvard University library in the year 1913.

In the year 1908 Pandit Mukandram was deputed but the Darbar to assist and help Norweign indologist Professor Sten Konow of the university of Oslo in his epigraphical works in Kashmir. Of Mukandram's erudition Konow recorded in the report he submitted to the Government, "He is an excellent scholar and whose knowledge of history is probably unsurpassed among the pandits of Kashmir." In the same year under the order of Maharaja, Mukandram was deputed to assist Pope Ved in his task to translate Tibetan texts into Sanskrit. After learning Tibetan language himself Kukandram translated 1,50,000 *shalokas* of Tibetan text *Kangur Tangur* into Sanskrit an astonishing feat which earned him admiration of the Maharaja and a cash prize of Rupees five hundred. The celebrated archaelogist A.H. Francke of the Moravian Mission also came to Kashmir in 1908 for the study of Tibetan inscriptions in Ladakh and

Tibet. Seeking local assistance in this task Maharaja Pratap Singh deputed Pandit Mukandram. In their tour to Dras, Francke placed before Mukandram some of the rock inscriptions that William Cunningham had earlier tried to decipher and thrown them in despair. In the report later submitted by Francke to the Government he recorded," What Cunningham had thrown in despair became intelligible in half an hour with Mukandram.

As the scholarly interactions between Western and Kashmiri scholars was growing steadily, the Russians also started getting interested to work on indological themes. It was in the year 1911 two Russian scholars, a husband and wife team by the names Victor and Luydmila Meirwarth from the Leningrad University visited India on a four year term to acquire manuscripts, artifacts and other related materials of antiquities from Indie for creating a museum of Indian antiquities at the Leningrad University. During their sojourns in India they also visited Kashmir, where they met Pandit Jagdhar Zadoo. Meirwarths who had obtained complete works of South Indian poet Basa Kavi desired to have these translated from Sanskrit into Russian language. This was possible only by translating first these works from Sanskrit into English. The translations were made by Jagdhar Zadoo which later found their way to Leningrad University museum in 1914. Jagdhar Zadoo had also brief encounter with a Japanese scholar Momo Moto Koso who too visited Srinagar in 1914.

In July 1912 to utter, astonishment of Aurel Stein he received a communication from the Viceroy's hand about the conferment of the title of K.C.I.E. (Knight Commander of Indian Empire). His investiture took place on October 15, at Srinagar in the hotel run by Nedous. At the ceremony Stein spoke of his best Indian friend Govind Kaul by stating," the first sure steps on the ladder that led me to this fame and success had been made with the friendship and help of Pandit Govind Kaul." This was the scholar friend with whom Aurel Stein had discussed every line and word of *Rajatarangini* on which they had worked together for more than a decade earlier. Emotionally it was hard for Stein to have written *finis* to a work whose every point he had analysed with Pandit Govind Kaul. Earlier also Stein had mourned the death of his friend. Then in Calcutta, July 13, 1899, he wrote, "This news has moved me very deeply and will remain a sorrow for a long time." And a week later he had still lamented Govind Kaul's death, "The loss of Pandit Govind Kaul lies heavily on my heart. He died too early and I deeply feel the gap he has left in my Indian life."

Stein saw that all his labours in Kashmir expounded on *Rajatarangini*, the catalogue of Ranbir Library and studying ancient geography of Kashmir with the help of Kashmiri scholars had become the vehicle that had brought him to the threshold of his self charatered career as a pioneer in Central Asian research. Aurel Stein was a Sanskritist first, archaeologist and explorer later. For this boon he owned his gratitude to Kashmir and its scholars.

While Stein was still engaged with his labours on *Rajatarangini* the Irish linguist, George Grierson had begun his monumental work on linguistic survey of India in 1898 alongwith the work on the Dictionary of Kashmiri Language. In this monumental tasks Grierson was chiefly assisted by Pandit Mukandram, Govind Kaul and Pandit Nityanand Shastri. As Govind Kaul died at a very young age of 50 years in 1899, it was left to the scholarly assistance of Pandit Mukandram to work on this land mark of Kashmir studies. He carried the work for next twenty years which was snapped only by his death in 1921. As the work on Dictionary of Kashmiri language was still incomplete, Grierson was now assisted by Pandit Nityanand Shastri till its completion in 1932.

The completion of Dictionary of Kashmiri Language was a task that took 34 years of dedicated scholarship of Grierson and his Kashmiri associates. On its completion George Grierson recorded, "I owe a heavy debt of gratitude to Professor Nityanand Shastri of Sri Pratap College Srinagar for much help in explaining difficult points in Kashmiri idiom and meaning that baffled my unaided knowledge. After the death of my assistant *Mahamahopadhyaya* Mukandram Shastri- this gentleman placed all the resources of his great learning at my disposal. He even wrote for me a commentary on an ancient Kashmiri work *Mahanaya Prakasa* which I found most valuable in elucidating the history of language. By the regretted death of Mukandram Shastri I lost a valuable coadjutor possessed of unique knowledge of his native language in all its forms ancient and modern and it is with genuine sorrow that I recognise that he did not live to see the completed sheets of work on which he spent such fruitful labour."

Grierson further noted, "as my knowledge of Kashmir language was small the real authors of this Dictionary are these Pandits." Commenting on the importance and use of Ishwar Kaul's *Kashmirishabdamrita* in the making of Kashmiri Dictionary, Grierson further observed, "whenever I was in doubt, Ishwar Kaul was my last authority."

Following the completion of Kashmiri Dictionary Aurel Stein was greatly happy to commend Pandit Nityanand's help in this work and had taken the first opportunity to write to him about the successful culmination. While *Sivaparinaya* was through the press it was Grierson's delight to write to Nityanand and inform him about the completion of task. Mukandram wrote the complete commentary on Kashmiri text *Sivaparinaya* of the great Lila poet Krishana Joo Razdan which Grierson later edited and published in six volumes between 1914 and 1924.

In 1914 Mukandram also collated the first complete and most authentic manuscript of the sayings of 14th century Kashmiri poetess Lal Ded from the tradition of oral utterances then prevelent in Kashmir. In this great Oriental work, Pandit Nityanand helped Grierson in 1917to unlock and understand the riddle of meters used in these poetical sans. It was this record of Lalla's saying which Grierson and Lionel Barnett edited and published as *Lalla Vakiyani* in London in 1920.

While Aurel Stein was still engaged on his Rajatarangini labour in 1896 he used the opportunity to record the Kashmiri folk tales verbatim in Roman script from the mouth of a peasant bard Hatim which were simultaneously recorded in *Devanagari* script by his co-worker Pandit Govind Kaul. The tales according to Stein had, "many humorous idioms unfamiliar to Indian Spirit". He further recorded, "I might well have hesitated about attempting the record of these materials at all, if I had not been assured from the start, of Pandit Govind Kaul's most competent and painstaking collaboration." The manuscript record of these tales was handed over to George Grierson by Stein in 1912 which the former edited and published from London in 1917 as *Hatim's Tales.*

Aurel Stein took the last public occasion to remember his old Kashmiri friend Govind Kaul by writing a record of his life and his achievements, "In Memoriam : Pandit Govind Kaul." This was published from Oxford in 1923, in which Stein recorded," Whenever Pandit Govind Kaul was by my side whether in the dusty heat of Lahore or in the Alpine coolness of Kashmir, I always felt as a historical student in continuity with the past history of India and only regret that a union with him is beyond possibility in this *Janama.* Kalhana himself the author of *Rajatarangini* with whose personality I felt, I was becoming so familiar across the gap of long centuries seemed aptly to illustrate this typical combination of features. In Pandit Govind Kaul I found them all again and united with a high sense of honour, a bearing of true innate nobility and a capacity for faithfull attachment which from the first made me cherish him greatly as a friend and an accomplished mentor." Stein also took this opportunity to record the epitaph for Ishwar Kaul too, whom he described as, "Kashmirian epiphany of Panini."

In the year 1921, Grierson became serious to analyse the 14th century Kashmiri work *Mahanaya Prakasa* of Sitikantha. He had studied the work but had found it archaic to understand. He was not sure of his treatment and hence hoped to secure the help of a Kashmiri scholar. The task was completed as per the arrangements arrived between Stein, Grierson and Nitayanand.

In July 1923 German scholar Maurice Winterntiz, who had earlier served as an amanuensis for 18 years to legendary Max Mueller at Oxford, visited Kashmir. Winterntiz had come to India in connection with his monumental work about history of Indian literature and it was also his intention to edit the great Indian epic *Mahabharata,* using manuscripts from Kashmir. Winternitz sought Aurel Stein's help in this regard. His encounter with Nityanand resulted in Kashmir *Mahabharata* text edited in 1923 by him, finding place of honour on the shelves of library in the University of Prague in Czechoslovakia. Nityanand also assisted Winternitz with history of Naga traditions in Kashmir, the duly acknowledged account of which finds mention in the History of Indian Literature edited by Maurice Winternitz that was published by Calcutta University in 1927.

While Witernitz took assistance of Nityanand for the edition of *Mahabharata,* Dutch scholar J. Ph. Vogel too was attracted to the tradition of Naga worship in India and Kashmir bearing strong references to Naga worship from the legendary accounts available in *Nilamata Purana,* sought help of Nitayanand. The monumental work was published from London in 1926 under the title "The Serpent Lore - Naga Worship in Legend and Art." According to vogel the persons to whom he was indebted for the successful completion of the task included Sir John Marshall, Sir George Grierson, Professor Julius Bloch, Sir Aurel Stein and Professor Nityanand of Kashmir amongst many other distinguished scholars. Due to his contribution in this work, the Kashmiri scholar stood shoulder high alongside the icons of Indology.

American Sanskritist, Professor Franklin Edgerton from Yale University came to Kashmir in May 1927 for a year's study on Kashmir *Saivism.* He too sought assitance of Aurel Stein, who according to Vogel "knew better than anyone else learned class of Kashmir." Following his joint pursuits with Nityanand, Edgerton recorded "but for his vast knowledge of Kashmir *Saivism* I would have been less knowledgeable on this subject and only regret my short stay in Kashmir."

During the decade between 1920 to 1930 Grierson studied Kashmiri texts-, *Krishnaavtara Lila, Lavkush Charita* and Kashmiri *Ramayan.* He was confronted with many difficulties in understanding these works. In all these he took assistance of Nityanand following which, these texts appeared in press in 1928 and 1930 published by Asiatic Society of Bengal. The year 1928 was a landmark year for George Grierson. It brought him the highest British honour in the confernment of the title of Order of Merit as recognition of his extraordinary scholarly attainments. Grierson received a stream of congratulatory messages. One came from Kashmir from Nityanand. Replying this communication Grierson took the opportunity to pay a tribute to Kashmiri scholarship, when he wrote, "that my pleasure is increased by the knowledge that learned friends like you who are competent to judged consider it has been deserved".

In the year 1932 Europe's attention got attracted to bring out an edition of Kashmir's oldest text *Nilamata Purana,* like it had earlier got attracted to *Rajatarangini* a work that occupied Stein's more than a decade of time. It was now the Dutch scholar Vogel who through his pupil K.de.Vreese at Leiden University in Holland began on the task. In order to get a help from a Kashmiri authority in this matter in a manner Govind Kaul gave to Stein on his editions of *Rajatarangini* and in cataloguing Maharaja Ranbir Singh's manuscript library, Vogel placed his request to Nityanand. He wrote to him,"when do I come to land of Bharata again and to Srinagar, the girdle in Himalayas and in that city behold your moon like face again. It has to be arranged by the Creator. It is unlikely that I can come again but some day my pupil K.de.Vreese may visit Srinagar and benefit himself by learning from you the way I did. I seek your help and guidance on many a matters." Subsequently an edition of *Nilamata Purana* in Sanskrit written in Roman script appeared in press in 1936 from Voolberg, Holland. Vreese dedicated the work to Sir Aurel Stein.

Stein called Nityanand as the "crest jewel amongst the scholars of Kashmir" and sometimes as "scholar of scholars". Such remarks were a regular feature in vast number of letters he wrote to Nityanand from wherever he was. Whether on board of a ship in Persian Gulf, or from far away in Europe from Siracusa, Italy or from Oxford, from Harvard in Boston or from Persia and Vienna, he kept himself in constant contact and remained in know of all developments that were taking place in the course of interface, so well initiated by his teacher and mentor George Bhuler. Stein took every opportunity to give impetus to this racy affair.

Like Girerson, Stein pleaded with the authorities in India for an appropriate recognition of Nityanand's scholarly achievements. About him Grierson had opined,"No one in Kashmir deserves it better." Stein too appealed to Gopalaswami Aiyengar, the Maharaja's Prime Minister in 1936 and later in 1938 to Colonel E.J.D. Colvin who then was the Prime Minister, stating, "Nityanand was the foremost amongst the scholars still left in Kashmir which represented the tradition of learning in Hindu India from ancient times and has earned the Brahamnic community of Kashmir such distinguished place in history."

Among the last scholarly feats achieved by Nityanad was a Kashmiri and Sanskrit translation of the 14th century Spanish classic *Don Quixote* which Stein had sought from him in 1935 at the request of his Harvard friend Carl Kellor who then was also the President of Harvard Board of Studies. Kellor had translated versions of this Spanish classic in most of the important world languages except that in Kashmiri and Sanskrit. Down with paralysis that had struck him 1934, Nityanand collaborated on this task with another Kashmiri scholar. The task was completed by both Jagdhar and Nityanand as per the arrangements made by Stein. The Kashmiri and Sanskrit translations of *Don Quixote* arrived in Boston, Harvard in July 1936. Of this feat Stein wrote to Nityanand, "they are now deposited on the shelves of Harvard University Library - the greatest library in the world and thus perpetuate your name and fame."

Like *Rajatarangini* the *Nilamta Purana* under Vreese's hand had more than one motif. In 1938 Vreese using the good support of Aurel Stein, began to work on an annotated edition of the *Nilamata Purana.* He was confronted by many problems in interpreting the text of *Nilamata Purana.* He again sought Stein's help, who traced his steps yet again to Nityanand.

While Stein was losing no opportunity that spanned almost five decades, to make constant contributions to the interface between Kashmiri and Western scholars, his own fascination to Kashmir and particularly to his labours devoted to *Rajatarangini* and other works never ceased in him. In 1940 while planning for his Afghanistan explorations even though having attained the advanced age of 78 years Stein made a round about trip to Srinagar and then to Jammu. From Jammu December 18, 1940 Stein wrote to Mrs. Fred Andrew's wife of his lifelong friend. "I visited again after 50 years the Raghunath Temple Library. It's 6000 old Sanskrit manuscripts had been catalogued by me with the help of Pandit Govind Kaul and another excellent Kashmiri scholar Sahaz Bhat in what now seems like a previous birth. It had been a dreary task but it saved the collection from being lost. I had a very attentive reception, had to talk Sanskrit again for an hour or so and thus purified my tongue by use of the sacred language after all my peregrinations in the barbarian North and West. It was a quient experience to find myself in the end garlanded in the traditional Hindu fashion for the first time in my life."

Following Stein's departure from Jammu the Wali of Swat advised him that tribal conditions still did not permit Kohistan tour for him. Just then with time on his hand, he began on the new edition of *Rajatarangini* which he intended to revise with illustrations of photographs of ancient sites in Kashmir that he had taken about 50 years back. A pleasant holiday accorded by *fate* enabled Stein to complete the work of his youth now with the assistance of a hardworking Punjabi Brahamin Assistant. All those who had earlier helped him had passed away. It was an amusing experience for Stein to find that he had become as it were a historical record himself. Before his final departure from the dominions of Maharaja Hari Singh, following a route along the Kishan Ganga River, Stein wrote in his memoirs, "How grateful I must feel to kindly fate which allowed me to do so much of my work in Kashmir for the last 55 years." On this observation his old friend Dunsterville equally energetic and adventurous wrote to him, "We all think it is now time for you to stop exploring and come home". Stein agreed with his friend. To him home was where his work took him and that was Kashmir, the green paradise.

But then time lasts for none. The first of this great trio in the edifice of interface between European and Kashmiri scholars, Grierson expired in 1941 followed by Nityanand in 1942 and a year later Stein in Kabul in 1943. With their end, the glorious chapter of interface also came to an end which had received an unlimited measure of patronage under the great Dogra dynasty of Jammu who for this act have gone in the annals of Indian history among the few Maharajas in India of scholarly disposition, while the mantle of that glory shone pristinejy in the crown of Maharaja Ranbir Singh whosed foresight and erudite Royal character bears testimony to this interface.

The interface, to explore and study the vast treasures of this literary blaze helped the cause of systematic Indological research in Kashmir. It also established Kashmir's cultural greatness and literary traditions at a time when few were aware of it. It compensates for some unhappy relations between Europe and India in political and commercial spheres. These will be forgotten by the future while the achievements of the interface in scholarship unearthing cultural and literary legacy of Kashmir will ever be remembered by posterity.

The interface brought the understanding of the ethos of Kashmiri culture and recognised the value of its contribution to the history of world culture. It showed that in the higher reaches of human spirit there is neither East nor West, that humanity is one beneath the trappings of custom and skin, that in a sense. in quest of learning and knowledge, man is classless, nationless king over himself.

This interface also brought to light the inner essence and beauty of Sanskrit literature in Kashmir and the role it played must ever be remembered with gratitude by generations of scholars all over the world and particularly by Kashmiris for ensuring their motherland a glorious and permanent place in the estimation of the world. It was through this realisation that highly civilised minds and men of letters outside India looked on Kashmir's literary achievements as important to them as treasures that should be enjoyed by the world.

And here the recognition of Europe's appreciation about Kashmiri scholarship not only strengthened their faith in the high standard of Kashmiri erudition but also led to coviction that Kashmir was a great seat of learning and knowledge and formed the fountain head of ancient Indian mind. The fruitful collaboration between Western and Kashmiri scholars served the best interests of Kashmir and Europe. This contact and mutual respect also marked on one hand an event of promotion of universal peace and on the other, of the understanding of the importance of the preservation of the cultural treasures of Kashmir. It also prevented loss of one of the finest records of Oriental history. Now that few leads of this interface have come to light, there would be yet many areas which still need to be explored. It hence invites a further detailed investigation by scholars.

MANUSCRIPT TREASURES

Yet another remarkable but sadly an underscored aspect of Kashmir's great heritage are the Sanskrit manuscript treasures in *Sharada* script. Even though it were the Pandits of Kashmir who wrote a vast amount of their literature in Sharda script, the appreciation of the wealth of these manuscripts belongs to Western scholars who collected and collated these manuscripts, bringing them to light, thereby making these great treasure stores of Sanskrit learning in India known and available to the scholars of world.

It goes to the credit of William Jones the first European scholar who made use of a Kashmiri *Sharada* manuscript for the English translation of Kalidasa's play *Shakuntala* in 1789 that is considered as one of the most significant services in the cause of international literature. This work also led to the recognition of original Kashmiri text as one of the most reliable of the masterpiece in the world literature.

But it was almost a century of long wait until 1875 when *Sharada* manuscripts of Kashmir drew attention of Western scholars in real sense. It was by an order of the government to proceed on a tour to Kashmir in search of Sanskrit manuscripts that Georg Buhler arrived in Srinagar on August 11, 1875. Buhler was assisted in this task by Pandit Radhakrishan, the first native Kashmiri who allowed Europeans to see his collection of manuscripts. He was also the first Kashmiri who addressed the Government of India, recommending, that Sanskrit manuscripts possessed in native libraries in Kashmir should be catalogued. The result of this exercise led to collection of more than 300 precious pieces of these great Kashmiri works by Buhler for deposit in the government collection.

Buhler's collection was adorned by the manuscripts of the *Lallavakyani*, the *Banasuravadha* and the *Krishnavatara*. The manuscript of *Hasikavriti* was a real gem in the collection. And the most outstanding piece of Kashmiri manuscript which went through the hands or Buhler was the original birch bark manuscript of *Paipalada shakha - Athervaveda* which subsequently found its way into the hands of Rudolph von Roth at the Tubingen University, Germany. This manuscript is acknowledged as the best Indian manuscript now lying in Germany. It was Buhler who established that original birch bark manuscript of *Rajatarangini* was never to be located as the same was lost by immersing it into Jhelum river by Pandit Chand Ram's father who thus had believed to have saved it from the possible consequence of defilement.

It was not only Georg Buhler who obtained such a large collection of Kashmir Sanskrit manuscripts but Aurel Stein during his many visits to Kashmir between 1888 to 1905 acquired at his expenses chiefly at Srinagar 368 Sanskrit texts. In May 1911 this collection was formally handed over by Stein to the Curators of the Indian Institute, Oxford. These treasure pieces were deposited under Stein's benefaction with conditions for compliance. The most remarkable manuscript of this collection was that of *Nilamatapurana*. It was bought from Pandit Kantha Bhatta with the help of Pandit Sahaz Bhat in 1905 and is regarded as the best known of all the manuscripts on the treatise.

Pandit Govind Kaul's and Damodars manuscripts of *Rajatarangini* are another outstanding works contained in this collection. Of Damodar's *Rajatarangini* Stein had observed, "had he been spared of death to complete the work, Kalhana past many generations could not have found a worthier successor". And remarkable as it is that Stein himself completed a revised edition of *Rajatarangini* after five decades of its first publication in 1892 with illustrations of photographs which he had taken during his survey of ancient geography of Kashmir. The manuscript alongwith the photographs was passed on by Stein to Oxford University in 1941. However due to some delay between the arrangements made by him, the Kashmir Darbar and Oxford University and subsequent death of Stein in 1943, this work could never see the light of the day. Stein's collection also had a volume of *Mahabharata* manuscript which was obtained under a registered sale deed executed in Sanskrit. This manuscript still remains unstudied even though many editions of Kashmiri *Mahabharata* are printed and published over these decades. And this apart many other Kashmiri *Mahabharata* manuscripts today are lying in the Prague University in the former Czechoslovakia.

Another great Kashmiri manuscript which came into Stein's hands was that of the first written Kashmiri work *Mahanaya Prakasa* which found its way to Grierson's use at Gleangery in Ireland for elucidating the history of Kashmiri language. Likewise the manuscript of *Lallavakyani* collated by Pandit Mukandram today adorns the collection of Oriental and India House Collections in the great British Library. Similarly the manuscript of famous Kashmiri folk tales the *Hatims Tales* comparable to *Arabian Nights* and remarked to contain "certain humorous idioms unfamiliar to Indian spirit" also enriches Grierson's collection in Ireland. This collection also contains the manuscripts of the first Sanskrit grammar of Kashmiri language *the Kashmirishabdamrit, Krishnavatara Lila* and Kashmiri *Ramayana.*

The unique Kashmiri and Sanskrit manuscripts of the translation of 14th century Spanish classic *Don Quixote* today adorn the shelves of Harvard University at Boston in America. And it too is well known that the best manuscript of *Panchtantra* stories on which the German scholar Johnnes Hertel published the edition of this work from Harvard in English language in 1901 came from Kashmir from the hands of Pandit Sahaz Bhat, while the manuscripts *of Nilamatapurana* enrich the library of Leiden University in Holland.

From this brief account it becomes clear that more than 700 Sanskrit manuscripts of Kashmir and some of which are rare and unique are today lying in various libraries abroad. It is time that these treasures of Kashmiri cultural heritage are studied for a comprehensive assessment. Many other lie scattered and in neglect even in India. However it is also the sad story of recent times that Pandits forced by circumstances of imposition of Persian and Arabic influence on their language has caused *Sharada* script to wane away from the sight. The most tragic aspect of the literary history of Kashmiri Pandits is accounted for by the fact that what the forefathers of Pandits wrote just a century ago in the most common script *Sharada* is sadly not readable to its present generation.

Believe it or not today there are but a handful of elderly Kashmiri Pandits that include few of their most eminent scholars who can read and write in Sharada script. Yet the most valuable of their ancient literature is contained in manuscripts writtten in *Sharada* character. Despite the tragic happenings that the Pandits have faced in Kashmir even in post independent India, Pandit house, holds still possessed the precious family heirlooms of *Sharada* manuscripts written by their forefathers. They prized their possession and guarded these as sacred for they bore the best stamp of their literary pursuits.

Today the picture is grim. The horrendous migration, the Pandits were compelled to make in the 90's of the last century caused them to abandon these *Sharada* manuscript treasures as they ran away from the valley to avoid doom and death. In today's scene *Sharada* manuscript in a Kashmiri Pandit house is a rarity. A single copy of it is a priceless heirloom of rich legacy and if by any chance it is on birchbark, even a single leaf instead on old home made paper, it is precious beyond description.

It is in context to these issues, survey and study of *Sharada* manuscripts all across wherever they are known to exist becomes urgent and important. The study also becomes imperative in the light of historico-cultural sense and hence it is important, that the younger and future generations of Pandits and the present generation in particular endeavours to estimate the richness of this legacy.

THE CONTEXT OF KASHMIRI PANDIT PAINTINGS

Another feature of these manuscripts are the pictorial illustrations they contain. Though Kashmiri manuscript paintings are well known to exist yet they have remained in some kind of obscurity in the art world. Even through nearly all major collections of Indian paintings, public or private world have some example or the other of Kashmiri work, remarkably little attention has gone to it in terms of Kashmiri Pandit paintings. A distinct preference seems to be expressed for works that are of a Pan-Islamic appeal.

The Pandit Paintings of Kashmir are remarkably popular category of mostly manuscript illustrations which appear in small pocket book sized works, often in Sanskrit. These are meant to be recited from, or which serve as prayer books in families. They are frequently of the size that can be earned along by the owner or they form part of devotees immediate belongings, things he would carry with him on a journey.

In general while the level of skills can vary a great deal, in the common run of these works it is the colouring that is emphasized over drawing. The painter shows a preference for spreading out his figures rather than grouping them together so that there is not too much over-secting of the groups and then sits to saturate the illustration with colours.

The range of colours he applies is not essentially wide but there is a marked preference for certain colours like Lapis-lazuli, blue, orange, mavue or violet and a strong moss-green. White is also used in large quantities. Frequently it is possible to immediately recognize a Kashmiri Pandit painting because of its theme and range of colours. The paintings show depth and recession of space by means of differently coloured grounds, a green followed by a mavue, followed by a red to distinguish one plane in a painting from the other.

The painter frequently shows no hesitation to alter a composition by turning things around and governing them with laws of his making. It is most common for the Kashmiri Pandit painting to appear as a work where the painter takes liberties with appearance, for much is being said in it by him in a dense abbreviated fashion with intensity and compactness.

These paintings are like thousand petalled lotus of Indian myth, yet the Pandit paintings have been more believed than explored. The extent to which their roots extend, the sources from which these draw nourishment, the direction of their growth across time, their texture,even the full colourful range of their expanse are but poorly known.

In text, Kashmiri Pandit pantings are exclusively based on Hindu religious themes with occasional local emphasis. They show a process of cultural assimilation and diffusion among other things and go well beyond being merely interesting. They are significant to our present understanding of the way some things operated in India in the past. Besides they show an account of finest artistic traditions of Kashmir. These works need to be seen not simply as historical documents which they are,but also for their stimulating richness and enhanced visual quality.

But a close acquaintance with what constitute Pandit paintings of Kashmir. while only a small number of these significant works have survived, yields much to appreciate in terms of their range and scope. They make it possible to see how the work of Kashmiri Pandit painter challenges several weii established ideas. In quality these paintings range from the very sumptuous to the very cursory. They force us to raise questions and think afresh about the standard Indian model of painting essentially confirmed to artists or families of artists located at one place and turning out works essentially for local or regional consumption.

No clear documentation is available on these works but one suspects that the extent of their stylistic area may have even been wider than what they indicate through their existing small number. Their spread is truly impressive. The thought these paintings raise are doubtless strong and insistent.

One is struck by other thoughts as one explores Kashmiri Pandit pantings, how for instance, a style as it gets formed over a period of time can draw upon visual ideas and iconographies that stretch far back into the past and seem to have survived some how by being deeply embedded, perhaps dormant in the awareness of the people. The challenge through which this sap rose up and energized the artistic endeavour of Pandits adding new flavour to the cultural life is not easy to determine. It can well be imagined than described or explained.

Their early style has survived in modified folkish and ritual forms over a long period of time. They are not easy to be categorized. They are not court paintings. They are not elitist or exclusive. The Pandit painters from which their patronage came and to whose needs they addressed seem to have been close to the people in the midst of whom they lived and for whom they produced their works. The paintings obviously form an art that was understood by the people for whom it was created and who in fact sustained it. However whatever number of these paintings have survived bring out essentially a compact identifiable but little known phase of Kashmiri art and the issues it raises. These are well defined and rich enough to offer an area of study that enhances our awareness of a significant chapter of Indian art while providing finest insights into the ways things happened in this field in the past.

With this appreciation the tendency among Art historians to see Kashmiri Pandit paintings as only a marginal activity in the context of Indian art must cease and-dawn awareness that they are highly innovative and absorbing in the matter of design and composition. They show freedom which is quite remarkable and has workmanship of the kind that commands distinct respect. Hence it is time that these paintings are saved from getting lost. Their preservatation and cataloguing must become a priority of the community in preserving a vital aspect of their cultural identity.

ANALYSIS OF THE ISSUES

However there need be no hesitation to acknowledge that by the end of the fourth decade of last century these traditional marks of Kashmiri Pandit cultural identity were already on the wane. The legacy appeared to have been snapped by the time India became independent in 1947. And pertinent here is to recall Aurel Stein's words who was first to recognise this syndrome of declining legacy in Kashmiri Pandits when he wrote in 1938, "how great the risk is now a days of such traditions being lost for good under the sad changes which are taking place in Kashmir."

This forewarning doubtless has turned prophetic when we see cultural traditions and traditional pursuits by Pandits in retrospect with reference to present scenario. Events which have occurred in the last five to six decades have retained their immediacy for many Pandits today. Very few regrettably understand why and how these traditional pursuits were abandoned. And virtually none admit the grave error of having knowingly forsaken these to casual reasons. Kashmiri Pandits today seem to have abdicated or almost abdicated their traditional pursuits with unfortunate social consequences. The behavioural code of Pandits is liberal but not absolutely so. There is nevertheless no common consensus on where to place limits. A change of focus soon evolved with emphasis upon the process of change by which Kashmiri Pandits repudiated the synthetic elements in their traditions.

How some of the most profound cultural attributes of the Pandits have radically changed in the course of five decades is my central concern. The Kashmiri Pandits have always felt vulnerable and weak as a group which has destroyed past roots and is reluctant to grow new roots. To compensate for their felt status Kashmiri Pandits seem always to have over adapted to whatever happened to be in their host environment. Yet the Pandits have to rediscover their traditional pursuits to reassert their past claims which alone will enable them to meet the future with glory.

Kashmir produced an unending procession of men and women who inspired by their mighty religion and faithful to their ancient ideals entered the life and resolved the riddles of existence, devoting themselves body and soul to attain the eternal philosophical truth and then to preach and teach the truth to the humanity. But today a rising number is undergoing a strange metamorphosis when its younger generation is cut quick to assume new airs and turning apostate unlike their ancestors who once respected good old traditions. The fresh saplings of our community who stand still in the need of watering, heave high their haughty head in an air of supreme independence and indifference. When these inexperienced young men, the roots of whose knowledge are but loosely held, appear to have abandoned the bit of their venerable forefathers, it comes as a sore blight to our worthy legacy when they are trying the illusive path of the new civilisation.

Would to God we realise the responsibility as vital organs of our cultural life to reinterpret and rediscover our legacy of our traditional strengths and thereby earn the gratitude of the community by taking voluntarily a keen interest in their rejuvenation by adjusting to matters of our social importance. The past recalled by us today differs substantially from the present we actually live in. For the Kashmiri Pandits the conflict in the last five decades has been less between history and value than between history and necessity. To be vital, identity must have real reference to our objective situation. Personal objective must have objective significance. It must serve an adaptive or survival purpose and when it loses that purpose it must be surrendered despite the pain of that surrender. The Pandits surrender of past beliefs and ways has been made more difficult by the sense that what was necessary was not necessarily always worthwhile.

We love our world not only because we will inherit it but because we think that it is good. Yet we do not cling to this inheritance. On the contrary we have proved remarkably willing to jettison the tradition with which we had previously identified ourselves once and the rationale of its original acceptance seems to be gone.

The willingness to change has not been entirely the rational acknowledgement of the demands of the reality. We have moved by the need of social acceptance and security. A sense of vulnerability rather than rationality lies behind apparently rational and dispassionate willingness to change. In the past five decades in the Pandits personality has not been entirely an exercise in free choice and in the recent years many of us can no longer say what they thought of this transformation and what they wanted to be?

Even though Kashmiri Pandits are loath to surrender the callings of tradition yet economical and occupational questions have generated the greatest concerns among them which seem to be a single largest positive factor in contributing to the decline in pursuing our traditional pursuits. Another big factor has been the inability of our present generation to cling to our mother tongue Kashmiri and its indigenous script *Sharada*. This is most worrying aspect of our waning glory.

It may be pertinent to recall sister Nivedita's words, "A single generation enamoured of foreign ways is almost enough in history to risk the whole continuity of civilisation and learning. Ages of accumulation are entrusted to the frail bark of passing epoch by the hand of past desiring to make over its treasures to the use of the future. It takes a stubbornness a doggedness of loyalty, even a modicum of unreasonable conservatism may be, to lose nothing in the long march of ages".

Alas! our purest pursuits are waning with time and signs of early greatness are fast disappearing. Our best principles of life are now at the mercy of heterogeneous accumulation of knowledge. New theories new lines of actions are operating on our raw youth. Are we undone? Is there none who would deliver us from imminent peril.

The future may probably find us on the cross roads. The division will not be between those who are committed to the past and those who are not but between those who fervently embrace new identity and those who will want to retain their traditional identity as Kashmiri Pandits. The manner in which individuals will define themselves will include less and less of those elements from our legacy and heritage which were considered so essential by our grandparents. Whether this will be good or bad development depends upon other choices we make and the degree of confidence and conviction with which these choices are made.

A LANGUAGE UNDER THREAT...

Kashmiri is an Indo-Aryan language and is developed enough to be used in the educational system and local administration in the Kashmir region. The language, however, suffers from neglect at the hands of the State Government.

There is also need to standardize and modernize the language and to accept both the Devnagri and Persio-Arabic scripts as equally valid.

CHAPTER 12

THE KASHMIRI LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

Prof. Omkar N. Koul

INTRODUCTION OF AUTHOR

Prof. Omkar N. Koul was born at Bugam, Kashmir on 7th January 1941. He is M.A. in Hindi and Linguistics and Ph.D in Linguistics.

He is a well-known expert in linguistics. He has held prestigious posts in the Government as Principal, Northern Language Centre, Patiala, Professor in the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussourie and Director, Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore. He has been President of the Linguistic Society of India. Currently, he is Chairman, Indian Institute of Language Studies.

He has authored and edited about 50 books and written about 150 papers on linguistics, language education, communication and comparative literature. Many of his books relate to the linguistic aspects of Kashmiri, like the 'Linguistic Studies of Kashmiri', 'Kashmiri, a Socio-linguistic Survey', 'An Intensive Course in Kashmiri' *etc. He has received prestigious awards on some of his publications.*

INTRODUCTION

Language and society are closely related. The relationship can be studied in two ways: (i) use of language in society and (ii) sociology of language. Keeping in view the main theme of the volume, it would be relevant and of interest to study the relationship between the Kashmiri language and society from the point of view of the use of language in Kashmiri society. However, certain remarks will be made with respect to the sociology of language. Without going into theoretical aspects of sociolinguislics. We will confine our description and analysis to certain linguistic characteristics of Kashmiri, issues related to its development with special reference to its use in different domains, its standardisation and modernisation. Language is a strong mark of social and ethnic identity in its natural environment. Language identity faces challenges in a situation where the speakers of a particular language group move out of its natural environment to a distant land as a result of socio-economic and political factors. We will point out certain social parameters of the language with special reference to language identity, language loss and language maintenance of Kashmiri by emigrant or displaced children.

Language reflects the society as clearly as the society is reflected in it. To illustrate this point, it would be necessary to make special references to the linguistic characteristics of personal names, surnames and nicknames of Kashmiri. They reflect the socio-cultural. religious, and linguistic patterns of the society. Most of the personal names in Kashmiri represent two main religious streams. Besides some genuine surnames, a large number of surnames and nicknames have developed by the local influences and common socio-cultural patterns characterising Kashmiri society. Well-defined religious boundaries do not seem to have a role in them. Kashmiris are very productive in the coinage of names and nicknames and perhaps, it is the strong texture with which the concept of *Kashmiriat* is woven. Similarly, in a day-to-day communicative situation, the use of kinship terms, modes of address and modes of greetings represent socio-cultural milieu of Kashmiri society. They are illustrated with special reference to their use. They have an important place in the use of language in society and sociology of language.

THE KASHMIRI LANGUAGE

The Kashmiri language is called kA:shur or kA:shir zaba:n by its native speakers. It is primarily spoken in the Kashmir valley of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in India. According to the 1981 census there are 30,76,398 speakers of the language. The census was not conducted in the year 1991. Keeping in view the increase in population, it has above 4 million speakers in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and is spoken by about 0.4 million Kashmiris settled in other parts of India, and other countries.

Kashmiri is an Indo-Aryan language. Its classification has however been debated at length. Grierson (1919). Morgenstieme (1961), Fussman (1972) etc. classify it under Dardic group of languages, which is a sub-family of Indo-Aryan languages. The term Dardic is stated to be only a geographical convention and not a linguistic expression. The classification of Kashmiri and other Dardic languages has been reviewed in some works (Kachru 1969, Strand 1973, Koul and Schmidt 1984) with different purposes in mind. Kachru points out linguistic characteristics of Kashmiri. Strand presents his observations on Kafir languages. Koul and Schmidt have reviewed the literature on the classification of Dardic languages and have investigated the linguistic characteristics or features of these languages with special reference of Kashmiri and Shina.

Kashmiri has two types of dialects: (a) Regional dialects and (b) Social dialects. Regional dialects are further of two types: (I) those regional dialects or variations which are spoken in the regions inside the valley of Kashmir, and (ii) those which are spoken in the regions outside the valley of Kashmir. The Kashmiri speaking area in the valley is ethno-semantically divided into three regions: (1) Maraz (southern and southeastern region). (2) Kamraz (northern and northwestern region) and (3) Srinagar and its neighboring areas. There are some minor linguistic variations mainly at the phonological and lexical levels. Kashmiri spoken in the three regions is not only mutually intelligible but also quite homogeneous. These dialectical variations can be termed as different styles of the same speech. Since spoken in and around Srinagar has gained some social prestige, very frequent 'style switching" takes place from Marazi or Kamrazi styles to that of the style of speech spoken in Srinagar and its neighboring areas. This phenomenon of style switching is very common among the educated speakers of Kashmiri. Kashmiri spoken in Srinagar and surrounding areas continues to hold the prestige of being the standard variety which is used in mass media and literature. Kashmiri has two main regional dialects, namely Poguli and Kashtawari spoken outside the valley of Kashmiri (Koul and Schmidt 1984). Poguli is spoken in the Pogul and Paristan valleys bordered on the east by Rambani and Siraji and on the west by mixed dialects of Lahanda and Pahari. The speakers of Poguli arc found mainly to the south, southeast and southwest of Banihal. Poguli shares many linguistic features including 70% vocabulary with Kashmiri (Koul and Schmidt 1984). Literate Poguli speakers of Pogul and Pakistan valleys speak standard Kashmiri as well. Kashtawari is spoken in the Kashtawar valley, lying to the southeast of Kashmir. Bhadarwahi borders it on the south. Chibbali and Punchi on the west, and Tibetan speaking region of Zanskar on the east. Kashtawari shares most of the linguistic features of standard Kashmiri, but retains some archaic features, which have disappeared from the latter. It shares about 80% vocabulary with Kashmiri (Koul and Schmidt 1984). No detailed sociolinguistic research work has been conducted to study different speech variations of Kashmiri spoken by different communities and speakers, who belong to different professions and occupations. In some earlier works beginning with Grierson (1919: 234) distinction has been pointed out in two speech variations of Hindus and Muslins, two major communities who speak Kashmiri natively. Kachru (1969) has used the terms Sanskritized Kashmiri and Personalized Kashmiri to denote the two style differences on the grounds of some variations in pronunciation, morphology and vocabulary common among Hindus and Muslims. It is true that most of the distinct vocabulary used by Hindus is derived from Sanskrit and that used by Muslims is derived from Perso-Arabic sources. On considering the phonological and morphological variations (besides vocabulary) between these two dialects, the terms used by Kachru do not appear to be appropriate or adequate enough to represent the two socio-dialectical variations of styles of speech. The dichotomy of these social dialects is not always clear-cut. One can notice a process of style switching between the speakers of these two dialects in terms of different situations and participants. The frequency of this 'style switching" process between the speakers of these two communities mainly depends on different situations and periods of contact between the participants of the two communities at various social, educational and professional levels. Koul (1986) and Dhar (1984) have presented a co-relation between certain linguistic and social variations of Kashmiri at different social and regional levels. The sociolinguistic variations of the language deserve a detailed study.

There is a general consensus amongst historical linguists that Kashmiri belongs to the Dardic branch of the Indo-Aryan family. Kashmiri is closely related to Shina and some other languages of the North-West frontier. It also shares some morphological features such as pronominal suffixes with Sindhi and Lahanda. However. Kashmiri is different from all other Indo-Aryan languages in certain phonological, morphological and syntactic features. For example. Kashmiri has a set of central vowels /I. I:. A. A:/ which are not found in other Indo-Aryan languages. In a similar way. in Kashmiri the finite verb always occurs in the second position with the exception in relative clause constructions. The word order in Kashmiri, thus, resembles the one in German. Dutch. Icelandic. Yiddish and a few other languages. These languages form a distinct set and are currently known as Verb Second (V-2) languages. Note that the word order generated by V-2 languages is quite different from Verb middle languages such as English. In a V-2 language, any constituent of a sentence can precede the verb. It is worth mentioning here that Kashmiri shows several unique features which are different from the above mentioned other V-2 languages.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The concept of Language Development or the Development of a Language is usually discussed with reference to the languages of the developing or third world countries. However, the language development may not necessarily be related to the economic development of a country. The models of the development may also vary and need not be universal. The process of development of a language has attracted the attention of different linguists and language planners lately. There is a broad consensus that the process of the development of a language must take care of three main aspects of the language: Graphisation or script, standardization, and modernization. Language planners have discussed the models of the language development with reference to different languages. These three major aspects form the part of the discussion about development with reference to all languages. Though the process of the development of Kashmiri continues at a slow pace, there has been no serious attempt to discuss the issues involved. Here, we will review the efforts made in the area of language development of Kashmiri: and discuss some of the main issues involved in this area.

Language development primarily involves two aspects related to language planning. Corpus planning and Status planning. It is important to keep in view the existing situation of the Kashmiri language, its spatial dimensions, and its use in different domains. The issues involved in the language development cannot be studied in isolation of these facts. We will briefly present an overview of the Kashmiri language and discuss the issues related to its development.

Language Development is directly related to the use of the language in different domains. Though all the languages develop as a natural process, it is only the human interruption, which makes the languages develop in a planned manner. In order to channelise the development process, one has to keep in mind its different uses. The primary uses of a language are in the areas of education, mass media, and administration. Certain demands are made for the language development keeping in view the demands of the society. Languages are used as a vehicle of communication in modern science and technology. It is only through the language that knowledge and skills are transmitted from one generation to another.

Use of Kashmiri in Administration

Kashmiri, though spoken by the dominant majority of people in the valley, has never been used as an official language in its home state i.e., Jammu and Kashmir. Persian was introduced as the official language during the Muslim rule beginning the 14th Century, which was later replaced by Urdu, another non-native language, in 1907, which continues as the official language even after independence.

Kashmiri was listed as one of the major Indian languages in the VIII Schedule of the Constitution of India. Keeping in view the multilingual character of the country, all the states had the freedom to use any of the major regional languages as the official languages in administration. As expected, most of the states chose languages of their respective regions as the official languages and made provision for their effective use in administration. The state of Jammu and Kashmir decided to continue the use of Urdu as the official language in the state.

Keeping in view the multilingual character of the State, the Constitution of the Jammu and Kashmir state recognizes six languages spoken in the State: Kashmiri. Dogri, Ladakhi. Hindi. Urdu. Punjabi and Gojri. It is the duty of the state to develop all these languages. The major native languages are Kashmiri. Dogri and Ladakhi. In the three regions of the state. Kashmiri is spoken in the valley of Kashmir. Dogri in the Jammu region, and Ladakhi in the Ladakh region. Kashmiri, though spoken by the majority of population in the state, is not even made an associate official language.

With a higher rate of illiteracy in the State, it is appropriate to use Kashmiri in administration in the valley where it is spoken natively. Kashmiri is not even used in administration even at lower levels. All the official communications are recorded in Urdu, a non-native language. The government officials have to communicate with the people at the grassroots level as effectively as possible. This cannot be done through an alien language. Therefore, there has been a strong movement in favour of the use of Kashmiri in administration in the valley at all the lower levels (Koul and Schmidt 1983).

Use of Kashmiri in Education

Kashmiri has a limited role in education in the state of the Jammu and Kashmir. Immediately after the independence of the country, it was introduced as a subject of study in primary schools in the

Kashmir valley; but its teaching was discontinued in 1955 under the excuse of reducing the "language load' of children in schools. Urdu continued to be used in its dominant role in education. It continues to be a compulsory subject of study in schools and also is the medium of instruction at the school level. Hindi was allowed to be used in these roles as an alternative in the Jammu region.

As a result of the language movement in favour of Kashmiri and efforts made by the educationists at the highest level, a department of Kashmiri was set up at the University of Kashmir. Kashmiri was introduced as a subject of study at the post-graduate level in the University of Kashmir in the early seventies. To begin with it offered a post-graduate diploma course in Kashmiri and later switched over to regular Masters, M.Phil and Ph.D courses. There has been an encouraging enrollment in these courses in the beginning.

Recent years have witnessed a language movement in favour of the use of Kashmiri in education in the valley. Intellectuals, literary organisations and educationists have been raising their voice in favour of the use of Kashmiri in education. As a result of this. Kashmiri was introduced as a subject of study in some colleges in the valley and as an optional subject in the secondary schools. Kashmiri is yet to be made a compulsory school subject in schools in the valley, though there is a great demand for it. According to a sociolinguistic survey of Kashmiri (Koul and Schmidt 1983). most of the people favour the use of Kashmiri as a medium of instruction in elementary schools: and also for the teaching of Kashmiri as a school subject right from the primary to the University level. As far as its use in education is concerned, the following areas need immediate attention:

(i) Kashmiri is to be provided a place in the school curriculum as a compulsory school subject in the valley where the majority speaks it natively. This would require the preparation of basic textbooks in this language.

(ii) Kashmiri is to be used as the medium of instruction up to the primary level in the valley. This would involve the preparation of textbooks of all the subjects thorough this medium.

(iii) It is necessary to train the teachers in the teaching of Kashmiri as a subject as well its use as the medium of instruction.

Use of Kashmiri in Mass Media

Kashmiri has a limited role in mass media. The setting up of Radio Kashmir in the state after independence has played a prominent role in the use of Kashmiri in radio broadcasts. Kashmiri was used as a medium of news and feature broadcasts on the Radio. It encouraged the creative writers and scholars in Kashmiri to write in Kashmiri. It resulted in the development of prose genre and boosted the literary activities in the language. The Srinagar Doordarshan has enhanced the role of Kashmiri in the electronic media. The survey of the use of Kashmiri in the electronic media has shown the popularity of the programmes. There is a demand for increase in the timings for the broadcast and telecast of programmes in Kashmiri on Radio and television.

There is limited use of Kashmiri in the print mass media. No daily newspaper is published in the language. Some weekly newspapers keep on appearing periodically and disappearing after a short while. The government of the state has not made an effort to provide support to these publications. The Government of India does bring out a fortnightly periodical entitled Praagaash. It has a limited circulation. Some other periodical journals like Shiraazaa (published by the J & K Academy of Art, Culture of Languages). Anhaar (published by the University of Kashmir) and Baavath are published more or less regularly. Similarly, there are Kashmiri sections in the college magazines published occasionally. The publications of some other journals like Kong Posh have not survived for long. Outside the valley of Kashmir. Koshur Samachar - a socio-cultural journal of Kashmiri Sahayak Samiti. Delhi, and Kashyap Samachar - a journal of Kashmiri Pandit Association Jammu. do have Kashmiri sections. They publish articles and literary pieces in Kashmiri in the Devanagari script. There has been no policy regarding the development of journalistic writings in the Kashmiri language. The technical vocabulary used in the journalistic broadcasts/telecasts and writings are primarily based on the Urdu phrases and vocabulary.

Thus, the use of Kashmiri in mass media has not attracted favorable attention so for. It has a limited use in the electronic media including Radio. TV. films etc. The use of Kashmiri in the electronic media has to improve both, in quality as well as quantity. Kashmiri has a very limited use in the print media. The language cannot develop fully unless it is widely used in different kinds of mass media. The state has to decide about the policy regarding its use in the mass media.

In the absence of a clear policy of the government of the state, the problems of the development of Kashmiri, with special reference to its use in education, mass media and administration will continue. No language can be developed in isolation of its use in different domains. These challenges are to be addressed by the language planners.

Standardization

There is a scope for standardisation of the Kashmiri language at different levels. The problem of the standardisation of the script is a prominent one. No serious efforts have been made in this direction so far. Several scripts are being used for writing Kashmiri. The major ones are: Sharada. Devanagari. Roman and Perso-Arabic. The question of the standardisation of the script is directly related to the question of its being able to represent all the speech sounds and other phonetic characteristics of the language. The Kashmiri language has certain speech sounds, which are not found in other Indo-Aryan or other neighboring languages. For example Kashmiri has two short and two long central high and mid vowels:/I/. /I:/, /A/ and /A:/, and dental affricates, /ts/ and /tsh/ which are not found in other neighboring languages. Similarly, palatalisation is an important feature of Kashmiri. These peculiar sounds and phonetic characteristics need to be represented in the script to be used in Kashmiri.

The original script of Kashmiri is Sharada. Old manuscripts are available in this script. This script has become obsolete now. and has a restricted use. It is used in writing of horoscopes by Kashmiri Pandits. This script does not represent the signs for all the sounds and other phonetic characteristics of Kashmiri. No special diacritic signs are being used to represent the peculiar sounds of Kashmiri.

The use of Roman for Kashmiri started with the European scholars who transliterated certain texts from Kashmiri into this script. It is widely used in citing the original literary pieces in the works related to literature, and also in the language data in the linguistic works related to the language written in English. No standardisation in the use of the Roman script for Kashmiri has taken place so far. Different scholars have used different diacritic signs for representing the sound system of the Kashmiri language. The Roman script continues to be used in citing data from Kashmiri in the books written in English related to Kashmiri language and literature. In linguistic studies, there is a convention of using Roman phonetic script. Different scholars are using different types of conventions not similar to those suggested in the IP A (International Phonetic Alphabet) to facilitate easy printing. Though the pace of the linguistic works in Kashmiri is quite slow, there is a need for standardising the Roman phonetic symbols for representing the speech sounds and other phonetic characteristics of the language.

The Devanagri script is mostly used in the research works related to the Kashmiri language carried out in Hindi for the citation of the data from Kashmiri. It is also used in certain Hindu religious texts, and in a few periodicals like Koshur Samachar. Kashyap Samachar etc. The Devanagri script requires modifications for writing Kashmiri texts. Different types of additional diacritics are used to represent the peculiar speech sounds of Kashmiri. The diacritics suggested by the Central Hindi Directorate in their Parivardit Devanagri have undergone various changes. The signs are not uniformly used in the printing of the Kashmiri text. The VIKALP (Visthapit Kashmiri Lakhak Parishad) - an association of Kashmiri scholars have suggested modifications earlier. Two main journals cited above published from Delhi and Jammu are currently using special symbols to represent additional speech sounds and phonetic characteristics of the language. Efforts are on to reach a consensus on it. Under a proposal of Government of India, the Northern Regional Language Centre conducted a workshop for the standardisation of the Devanagri script for Kashmiri. Based on the recommendation of the workshop, Penfosys, Pune have prepared a software which is expected to be used in the publications using the Devanagri script.

The official script of the Kashmiri language recognised by the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art. Culture and Languages is based on the Perso-Arabic script using additional diacritic marks for representing certain peculiar characteristics of the Kashmiri language. The additional diacritic marks have been suggested for writing Kashmiri vowels and consonants and for representing the phonetic characteristics of palatalization of the language.[1] This script is widely used in the publications of the Academy and other private and governmental publications. There are still inconsistencies found in the use of these signs. The recommendations made earlier are not followed strictly. Koul (1999) has suggested certain measures for the standardization of the use of the Perso-Arabic script for Kashmiri, The conventions of the script need to be reviewed for bringing in the uniformity so that the script represents the characteristics of the language.

Standard variety

As pointed out above, there are certain dialectical (both geographical and social) variations in the Kashmiri language. Kashmiri spoken in and around Srinagar has somehow attained the status of the standard variety. The speakers of other regions tend to switch over to this variety in their use in formal situations and interpersonal communication with the speakers of the standard variety. The variations are mostly reflected in the spoken variety. They are almost non-existent in the written domain of the language. The mass media and the publishers of literary books are playing an important role in the standardisation of the grammatical forms and structures. We do not however have adequate publications in different areas to standardise the use of Kashmiri in different technical and scientific domains. Keeping in view the limited use of Kashmiri in different domains, no serious efforts have been made so far in this area.

Modernisation

With the fast development in the areas of Science and Technology, it is imperative that the language be an effective vehicle for transmitting knowledge, skills, and disseminating information in these areas. Only a limited number of publications are available in the domain of science and technology. Modernisation of the language would demand the preparation of technical vocabulary and phrases to be used in the scientific and technical texts. No effort has yet been made to develop these special registers of the language. It has been a usual practice to adapt the forms used in Urdu according to the phonetic characteristics of the language.

The role of Institutions

The development of Kashmiri has not become a strong movement at the level of institutions so far. Only a limited number of institutions have played some role and are indirectly involved in the development of the language in different ways. Prominent among them are the Jamrnu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and Languages. University of Kashmir. Central Institute of Indian Languages etc.

The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages was established in the fifties and is charged with the responsibility of promoting all the languages which are listed in the Constitution of the Jammu and Kashmir State i.e. Kashmiri, Urdu, Hindi, Dogri, Gojri and Ladakhi. The Academy has made a significant contribution by bringing out quite a few books in the Kashmiri language. The Academy has prepared and published Kashmiri and Urdu- Kashmiri dictionaries in seven volumes each, and two volumes of a Kashmiri encyclopedia so far. The Academy provides subsidies to the authors and voluntary organisations for the publication of their books and also awards prizes for the books. It is due to the financial help provided by the Academy that certain books, especially anthologies of Kashmiri literature, have been brought out.

The Academy also brings out a bi-monthly journal entitled Shiraza, and an annual volume entitled Soon Adab, in Kashmiri. Both of these have devoted special issues to certain important themes. The Department of Kashmiri of the University of Kashmir has made a significant contribution to the use of Kashmiri in education, and the preparation of some basic text and reference materials in this language. The Department offers regular courses for Master's and M. Phil degrees, and provides facilities for the doctoral research in this subject. The department brings out a journal entitled Anahaar in this language. A large number of volumes of this journal has been devoted to different themes related to Kashmiri language and literature. The Department has also prepared and published different text materials, which are used as text, and supplementary materials for teaching Kashmiri as a first language.

The Government of Jammu & Kashmir do not have any department devoted to the development of a language or languages, similar to ones in different states. Most of other states have Language Departments and/or Textbook Boards devoted to the promotion of the language or languages of the state, and their use in education and administration.

The Govt. of India promotes all the languages especially those listed in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India. The Govt. of India has been providing funds to different states for the development of the languages, preparation and publication of textbooks, preparation of scientific and technical glossaries, etc. The Govt. also provides financial assistance for the publication of manuscripts, and makes bulk purchase of books in Kashmiri as in other languages. Only the Govt. of India under this scheme has supported a limited number of projects.

The Central Hindi Directorate has also brought out Hindi Kashmiri bi-lingual and Hindi-Kashmiri-English tri-lingual dictionaries. They have a very limited circulation. They are useful for the second language learners of Kashmiri.

Kashmiri is taught as a second language to the in-service teacher trainees in the Northern Regional Language Centre of the Central Institute of Indian Languages since 1971. A limited number of the teacher trainees trained in this language at the Center are teaching this language in their respective schools. Teaching of Kashmiri as a second language necessitated the preparation of instructional materials in Kashmiri suitable for second language teaching. The CIIL has prepared and published both text as well as supplementary materials for teaching of Kashmiri as a second language. There is a need for the preparation of additional need-based materials for teaching this language in the second language situation. There are no learners, dictionaries and other reference materials prepared and published in this language suitable for a second language teaching and/or learning situation.

As compared to other major languages listed in the VIII schedule of the Constitution of India, the development of Kashmiri has not been given proper attention due to various reasons. Kashmiri does not have prominent roles in the domains of education and mass media in its home state. It is also not used in the administration in the valley. The efforts made by certain State and Central Govt. institutions, autonomous and voluntary organisations have not been sufficient to develop this language. The problems regarding its standardization and modernization can be resolved only after Kashmiri is provided a proper role in education, mass media and administration. It is only after these roles are specified; that the steps to be taken for the development of this language will be meaningful.

Social Parameters

Language is primarily used as a vehicle of communication by its speakers in a society. It is a strong mark of social and ethnic identity of an individual, a group of individuals and a particular society as a whole. Language identity is a part of a social and ethnic group identity in its natural environment where the language is spoken natively. It is diluted in a situation where various linguistic groups arc involved in inter-communication. Language identity confronts challenges in a situation where the speakers of a particular language group have to move out of its natural environment to a distant land as a result of any socio-economic and political factors. Deliberate efforts need to be made to maintain this identity. In the case of Kashmiri, the migrants or displaced persons from the Kashmir valley who have either voluntarily migrated or where forced to do so and have settled down in the Jammu region of the state or other parts of India or abroad are facing challenges in maintaining the language. A sociolinguistic survey (Koul 1997) conducted for the language maintenance and language loss of Kashmiri migrant children in Jammu and Delhi in the age group of 10-20 reveals certain facts as follows:

(i) The use of Kashmiri is mainly confined in the oral communication at home between the elders and its use has decreased to 50% in the communication between elders and children in Jammu and to 20% in Delhi. Children prefer to use Hindi and English at home.

(ii) The children do not use Kashmiri even with other Kashmiri children or teachers in schools. It is only in the special schools meant for migrant Kashmiri children in Jammu. Kashmiri is occasionally used in oral communication.

(iii) The children do not listen to Kashmiri music or radio progainmes, and do not watch TV programmes in Kashmiri even if there is an opportunity.

(iv) The children do not read or write in Kashmiri. About 10% informants reported that they read Kashmiri in the Devanagri script.

(v) The children in Jammu have better opportunities in maintaining Kashmiri in their families than in Delhi. The reason being that most of them live in the cluster of houses/camps where they come in contact with other native speakers of Kashmiri.

(vi) Educated parents prefer to use English and Hindi in communicating with their children.

(vii) The parents prefer to send their children to English medium schools.

The survey also brought out the Kashmiri is maintained to a large extent by parents and other older respondents in their family domains. They have very rare opportunities in using the language in other social domains involving other members of the same language community. Kashmiri is not used in the work environment.

The tests conducted for assessing the language loss indicate that there is a loss of vocabulary related to the culture bound items, food items, typical Kashmiri household items, architecture and environment which are not now in use outside the valley of Kashmir. Similarly, the children do not understand and use idioms, proverbs, and literary terms in Kashmiri.

The results of the survey suggest that the maintenance of Kashmiri among the younger generation is under a serious threat. There is a continuous decline in its use outside the valley. In the absence of its use in education and other economic activities, special efforts need to be made by the parents. Kashmiri community and other agencies to ensure its maintenance in the family and some social domains as far as possible.

Though the Kashmiri language is not used adequately in education, administration and mass media in the Kashmiri valley, maintenance of Kashmiri as a spoken language in domestic and social domains is not under immediate threat. The maintenance of the Kashmiri language by the younger generation outside its natural environment is fast declining. This will certainly result in deepening the identity crisis of the Kashmiri community settled outside the valley in future.

Personal Names, Surnames and Nicknames

The personal names including surnames and nicknames of the people reflect the socio-cultural. religious, and linguistic patterns of the society in any language. A sociolinguistic study of these names has to take into consideration all these factors. Most of the personal names in Kashmiri represent two main religious streams of Hindus and Muslims. Besides some genuine surnames associated with Hindus and Muslims, a large number of surnames and nicknames have developed by the local influences and common socio-cultural patterns characterising Kashmiri society. Two well-defined religious boundaries do not seem to have a role in them. The phenomenon seems to be quite productive. It appears Kashmiris are very productive in the coinage of names and nicknames and perhaps it is the strong texture with which the concept of *Kashmiriat* is woven. Koul (1995) presents a detailed description and analysis of the personal names including surnames and nicknames. Here we will point out certain linguistic characteristics of the derivation or names and coinage of nicknames in non-technical terms.

Personal Names

Most of the Hindu names of one-word structure were after the names of gods and goddesses in ancient times. Some were after the names of animals, birds and objects of nature: sun, moon, mountains, rivers etc. The samples of such names are preserved in old Sanskrit texts written in or on Kashmir in their Sanskritised form (e.g. Avanda, Bhaskara, Bilhan, Amritlekha, Anjana, Bimbaa etc.) There are references of quite a few non-Aryan one-word names in *Nilmat Purana* too (i.e. Oran, Rocan, Nartani etc.). During the late medieval period and particularly after the 18th century there were two main developments: (i) personal names derived from Sanskrit and of non-Aryan origin are Kashmirised in both form and pronunciation, and (ii) single-word personal names became less frequent and were replaced by compound personal names.

The Sanskrit and Perso-Arabic borrowed personal names in Kashmiri have undergone various phonological changes to confirm to the phonetic and phonological structure of Kashmiri in their spoken usage but usually maintained their spelling system as per the original written conventions. For instance, the voiced aspirated stops / bh, dh, gh/ are replaced by /b, d and g/ respectively (eg. bhuushan > buushan "Bhushan', raadhaa > raadaa "Radha'. raghu > rwagl.). Similarly, the uvular stop /q/. fricatives / f. G and x / are replaced by /k, ph, g and kh/ respectively in Perso-Arabic borrowed words (e.g. qaadir > kAAdir 'Qadir'. shariifaa > shariiphl 'Sharifa, Gulaam > gwalaam "Ghulam". xa/ar> kha/Ir 'Xazar')

In the formation of compound or two-word Hindu personal names (mostly borrowed from Hindi), a set of definite second member morphemes used are raam (Ram), kaakh (Kak). cand (Chand). daas (Das), naath (Nath), laal (Lal), krishen (Krishen). and kumaar (Kumar). Whereas the terms naath and kaakh are added to the diminutive first names and others are added to the names borrowed from Hindi (e.g. day I raam/kaakh, shavl raam/kaakh, taaraa cand, krishen daas, brij naath). The second member terms of the Hindu female names are: maal (Mal), ded (ded). deevii (Devi), vatii (Vati) and kumaarii (Kumari). Whereas the terms maal and ded are used with diminutive forms of personal names, vatii and kumaarii are added to the first names borrowed from Sanskrit/Hindi (e.g. erni maal. gwani ded, prabaa vatii, ratnaa deevii, ushaa kumaarii). In recent years, single word personal male and female names (both indigenous and borrowed from Hindi) have again become popular (e.g. amit, aashuu, reckhaa, priitii).

Most of the Muslim personal names are of compound structure whish may or may not be followed by surnames. Earlier names are chosen strictly on the basis of religious texts. The ninety nine names of the God in the Islamic literature. These names have undergone various phonological changes. In certain case only the second member of the compound name is retained in its Kashmiirsed spoken form. (e.g. aahdl < abdul ahaad 'bdul Ahad', aziizi < abdul aziiz, 'Abdul Aziz').The diminutive or short forms are not compounded and are used in informal speech only (Aliyi < Alii mahmad 'Ali Mohammad') As in case of Hindu personal names, there is a trend of the use of single word personal names (mostly borrowed from Muslim names prevalent among Muslims outside the valley (e.g. hasiib "Hasib", shabiir < "Shabir"). Among the Muslim female names only a few traditional names as 'Fatima' are chosen on the basis of Muslim religious texts, a large number of other female names are after the names of objects of nature. nice qualities and objects of beauty. Most of these names are borrowed from other languages which are Kashmirized in their pronunciation.

Surnames and Nicknames

The practice of using surnames along with the personal names was not followed in ancient period in Kashmir. Rajatarangni mentions the use of some nicknames. The practice of using the surnames along with the personal names has become popular from the late medieval or early modem period.

The study of surnames and nicknames is important from socio-semantic point of view. The nicknames used as surnames among both communities are related to the person's profession, occupation, personality, locality to which a person belongs, particular incidents occurred in one's life, abnormal or extraordinary physical characteristics or temperament of the person concerned. The nicknames originally associated with particular persons have continued for generations in particular families. In certain cases the original incidents have been forgotten and it is not possible to explain why a particular name is associated with a particular person. Some of the surnames and nicknames (used as surnames) are common for Hindus and Muslims and others are different. A large number of nicknames are associated with person either for taking up a particular profession or occupation of for working for someone whose profession or occupation is known by the same name (eg. aarum vegetable grower' Aram, kraal 'potter', Kral, bazaaz 'cloth merchant' Bazaz).

A large number of surnames and nicknames are related to the name of locality or the place of residence of a particular person or family (e.g. trlsll 'Trisal', kilam 'Kilam'). In certain cases, the persons of such families have actually migrated from their original places of their residence years or generations ago, but the families are still known by a surname or a nickname related to their original place of residence.

The married women in their in-laws, mostly in villages, are known after the names of places of their parent's residence(e.g. buga:mic 'of Bugam'.

A large number of nicknames are associated with peculiar incidents which must have occurred with the persons concerned. It is not always possible to speculate such incidents and their association with these names (e.g. thapal 'snatcher' Thapal).

A good number of nicknames are associated with abnormal or extra-ordinary physical characteristics, handicaps or temperaments of the concerned persons (e.g. bombur 'black bee' Bambroo, kaav 'crow' Kaw). These nicknames once coined appropriately for a particular person, have continued for generations.

Besides the above types of nicknames prevalent among both communities, a large number of surnames of Muslims are borrowed from Persian and Arabic languages, and are related to certain religious sects of Muslims (e.g. ashaayii Ashayi, kAadrii 'Qadri).

A large number of Kashmiri surnames and nicknames have undergone some phonological changes. These terms are generally Hindi-Urduized or Anglicized in their written form and also in pronunciation e.g. guur < guuruu 'Guru', vaazI < vaazaa'Vaza.

As explained above, the oldest forms of personal names of Hindus can be traced from the written texts which do not provide the authenticity of their exact use in spoken form. The available references of personal names in Sanskrit texts composed in and on Kashmir, however, do help us to determine that most of the Kashmiri personal names were closely related to their Sanskrit origin. The structure of two-word personal names of Hindus seem to be a later development. There are both indigenous and borrowed fixed second name terms used for male and female names. These names frequently appear in the religious texts of Hindus. The personal names of Muslims though largely borrowed from Perso-Arabic sources, have been nativized in pronunciation. There are significant differences in their spoken and written forms.

The study of surnames and nicknames is a very important subject from sociolinguistic point of view. Besides some genuine surnames associated with Hindus and Muslims, a large number of surnames and nicknames have developed by the local influences and common socio-cultural patterns characterising the Kashmiri society. This is referred to as Kashmiriat. It is here that the well-defined religious boundaries do not have a role in the demarcation or distribution of these terms. A large number of these nicknames or so-called surnames are common among Hindus and Muslims. The phenomenon seems to be quite productive and has a potentiality of further development. There is a saying in Kashmiri that Kashmiris are very rich in the coinage of names and nicknames, and perhaps it is this strong texture with which Kashmiriat is woven.

KINSHIP TERMS/MODES OF ADDRESS/MODES OF GREETINGS

The use of kinship terms, modes of address and modes of greetings represent socio-cultural milieu of any society including that of Kashmiri. They have an important place in the sociology of language.

Kinship Terms

The kinship terms in Kashmiri represent cultural and sociological patterns of the society in which these terms are used. Kinship terms are usually classified into two categories: (a) consanguineal and (b) affinal. The dimensions of (i) generation, (ii) lineal (direct ancestors and direct descendents) vs. collateral (kinsmen descended from one's own ancestors i.e. uncles, brothers, nephews, etc.) and (iii) sex are important in the study of kinship terms. They indicate the close knit structure of the society.

In the first category kinship terms can be classified as closed blood relations (mool 'father', mAAj 'mother', booy 'brother', beni "sister", necuv 'son', kuur 'daughter'), distant blood relations (budybab 'grand father', naany 'grand mother', maas 'mother's sister', pwaph 'father's sister' etc). It may include compound kinship terms formed by adding modifiers and/or affixes like baDI, petri to the base kinship terms (e.g. baDi buDybab/ naan" "great grand father/ mother", petrl buDybab/naany 'grand father's brother/ grand father's brother's wife'). The modifier pitur (masculine) and pitIr (feminine) are used to denote the first cousin relationship (e.g.

pitur booy, pitIr beni). Similarly, -tur and -tIr suffixes are added to certain kinship terms to indicate further remoteness in consanguineal relationship (maamltur booy "mother's brother's son', maamltlr beni 'mother's brother's daughter"). The modifier voorl is added to indicate the 'step" relationship (voorl mool 'step father', voorl mAAj 'step mother'. The genitive markers sund and hund are also added to mark the distant relationship (neciv" sund nccuv 'grand son", koori hlnz kuur "daughter's daughter').

In the second category (of affinal), the kinship relations are as a result of marriage. Some relationships have more than one term (e.g. ruun/barthaa/khaavand/khaandaar 'husband', zanaanl/kwalay/trly/khaandaareny 'wife'). There are separate terms for all the blood relations of husband and wife (e.g. druy 'husband's brother", saal 'wife's sister', zaamltur 'daughter's husband" nwash 'daughter-in-law' etc). The modifiers petrl. pitur/pitIr. voorl and suffixes -tur/-tIr can be used with the affinal terms to indicate the distant relationship. There are separate terms for the man's in-laws (hohvur) as well as that of woman (vAAryuv). Thus, the kinship terms in Kashmiri cover wide range of relationships the people maintain. Kinship terms cannot therefore be studied in isolation. They form an important part of the social structure.

Modes of Address

The modes of address in Kashmiri reflect interpersonal relationships maintained in various contexts and situations. The modes of address represent the social hierarchy prevalent in the society. A large number of modes of address are based on the kinship terms. Here we will briefly mention the modes of address related to kinsmen and others to indicate their importance in understanding the social structure of the people. Certain honorific suffixes like Tooth. sAAb, jii. laal. jaan. raajl gaashl. jigur etc. are added to the kinship term booy for changing it to a mode of address. Notice that booy changes to bAAy due to a regular phonological change: bAAy'TooT, bAAysAAb, bAAylaal, bAAyjaan, bAAyraajI, bAAy gaashI, bAAyjigur. Similarly, the feminine honorific suffixes TAATh. gAAsh, dyed, jiglr and jii are added to the kinship term beni for changing them to modes of address: beniTAATh. benijigIr, benided. benijii. It is important to point out here that The modes of address formed by the above process need not be necessarily used for older brothers or sisters, but may be used for cousins, uncles, aunts, distant relations or for other elder persons for whom respect is intended. Sometimes, when elder persons address their brothers or sisters with particular modes of address in a family, their children too use the same modes of address. Related to kinsmen there are various modes of address used independently too. Each term may be used for more than one kinsmen depending on the acquired habit. For instance the terms bab. laalI(sAAb). TooTh. TaaThi(sAAb), boobjii, kaakh etc. may be used for father, grand father, elder brother or for an elder distant relative or any person for whom respect is intended. Similarly, the terms baabii, ded, jigIr can be used for mother, grand mother, aunt or distant female relation or a person for whom respect is intended.

The modes of address related to kinship terms are used in broad sense. They do not normally distinguish between the close blood relations and distant relations, between consanguineal and affinal categories. These terms arc not confined to actual kinsmen but can be used for person showing affection and respect too. For instance baabii can be used for a friend's wife and benijigIr for a friend's sister too.

Besides the modes of address based on the kinship terms, there are other forms of modes of address. The honorific suffixes sAAb and jii are added to the professional terms like doctor, vakiil 'advocate' teacher etc for turning them into terms of address (e.g. DaakTar sAAb, vakiil sAAb, maasTar jii etc.). Second person pronouns arc also used as modes of address. These pronouns arc of two types-: familiar/non-honorific singular and polite/honorific plural : tsI and tohy respectively. The polite pronoun is used for honorific singular as well. Similarly the vocative terms of address are also of two types: singular/non-honorific and plural/honorific: hayoo and hee.

The honorific terms maahraa. haz, jinaab, and sAA are very frequently used as terms of address with certain restrictions. Whereas maahraa and haz are used for addressing Hindus and Muslims respectively, the term jinaab can be used either with Hindu or Muslim. The term sAA is used for showing affection or intimacy.

The use of modes of address reflects the relationship between the persons engaged in communication. It shows the social hierarchy, status and interrelationship of the participants. The pronominal usage and modes of address form an important aspect of the socio-cultural milieu.

Modes of Greetings

In a greeting situation, two persons come in contact in a particular ethnic context, which is characterized by means of some paralinguistic features like gestures accompanied with certain statements. Like modes of address, modes of greetings form an important part of speech acts in the day to day communication.

There are two types of greetings in any language: verbal and non-verbal. Most of the time the greeting is incomplete without some kind of non-verbal behaviour implicit or explicit with the use of verbal mode of the greeting. It may be a nod, or a smile or a twinkle in the eye. Verbal greetings are not complete or effective in isolation unless they are accompanied with appropriate non-verbal expressions.

Non-verbal behaviour appears as an indispensable part of greeting that is often implied in the expression itself. For example, *namaste* "I'm bowing before you' denotes an activity of non-verbal behaviour. Often the responses of various greeting formulas are fixed and steoro-typed and clearly laid down in the books of etiquette.

Greeting expressions are not necessarily communication of information. Greeting expressions in most of the languages including Kashmiri consist of a kind of medical diagnosis, an inquiry about one's health as: *vaaray chivaa'?* 'How are you?" The literal meaning of a greeting in most cases is completely irrelevant.

Greetings are not merely symbols of adherence to certain norms and rules laid down by rules of etiquettes. They are more than this. They are a type of social rituals in which you generally say what the other person expects you to say.

Every culture has its own set of formalized greeting expressions and/or non-verbal greeting gestures like kissing, embracing, bowing, saluting with hand, hand shake, folding hands, prostration, touching feet etc.

From the point of view of predictability, greetings in Kashmiri fall within two broad categories: closed and open. The closed greetings are those which have only one fixed response, where the predictability is cent percent. On the other hand, the open greetings may have more than one response. They have limited predictability. Examples of both types are given below:

Closed (Maximum predictability)

Participants	**Greeting**	**Fixed Response**
Hindu to Hindu	namaskaar (mahraa)/namaste	namaskaar(maahraa)/namaste
Hindu to Muslim	aadaab(arlz)(haz/jinaab)	aadaab(arlz)(mahraa)
Muslim to Hindu	aadaab(arlz)(mahraa)	aadaab (arlz)(haz/jinaab)
Muslim to Muslim	aslaam alaikum	vaalaikum salaam

The Muslim to Muslim greeting phrases express the wish of "peace':

salam alaikum	"Peace be with you."
vaalaikum salaam	"And unto you be peace."

Open (Limited predictability)

People may greet each other using different greeting expressions and get alternative unpredictable responses as follows:

Greeting Expressions	**Alternative Response**
vaaray chivaa?	vaaray. toh" chivaa vaaray?
Are you fine'.'	Fine. How are you?
vaarayaa?	kwasshpAATh"
Are you fine'.'	I'm very happy
khAArly chaa?	aahansAA khAArly
Are you fine?	Yes. I'm fine.
k'aasAA/k'aa mahraa vaarayaa'?	toh" chivaa vaaray?
Are you fine?	Are you fine?
	tuhlnz meharbAAnii
	Your kindness.
	or zuv/dor koTh/lAsiv/Dyakl boD
	Be healthy/Be strong/Live long/Be lucky" etc.

Greeting phrases are mostly related to queries about one's health and well-being. The responses too refer to the greeter's health, happiness, well-being and longevity of life. The replies used by elders lake the form of blessings:

aadikaar (<adhikaar)	**‘Power/Authority’**
or/uv	“Healthy’
dor koTh	· Be strong !’
sadbiisaal vumlr	“May you live for hundred and twenty years!
rumi rcshun aay	“May you live a long life as that of a great Rishi!”
Dekl boD	“Be lucky!”
lAsiv	“May you live long!”
patrl gaash	“Be blessed with the light of children!’
Ach puur	“May your eyesight last for ever!’ etc.

Unlike English, Japanese, Chinese etc. the verbal greetings in Kashmiri like Hindi-Urdu are the same for different times of the day. There are no special phrases referring to morning, evening etc.

The greetings are determined by certain sociolinguistic variables of time, space, participants, channel and the communicative intent. Sometimes the same person may use different modes of greetings for different persons at different time. A beggar near a Muslim shrine uses the greetings appropriate of the name of the saint or shrine:

dasgiir kArinay athl roT	“May Dasgir help you !”
reshmool thAvinay vaarl	“May the Rishi keep you healthy!”

The same beggar may use different set of terms near a Hindu shrine like:

(mAAj) bagvatii kArinay anlgrAh	“May (Mother) goddess keep protect you!”

Time also play a role when two friends meet after a long time, the greetings of namaste/namaskaar. aadaab (ark) are repeated as: namaste namaste. namaskaar namaskaar. adaab (arlz) adaab (arlz).

The greetings thus reflect a wide range of socio-cultural patterns of the Kashmiri society. It indicates the concern about the health, prosperity and well-being of the people and seek blessings from Almighty, gods and goddesses, saints and elders.

CONCLUSION

Though included in the VIII Schedule of the Constitution of India. Kashmiri is not even recognised" as an associate official language in its home State for its use in administration. It has a primary role in day to day communication by its native speakers. The lack of adequate patronage of the language at the political and social levels has hampered its development. The language does suffer from the lack of standardisation especially in the use of Perso-Arabic and Devanagri scripts used for writing it. Its insufficient use in education and mass media is responsible for the lack of modernisation. It is only its adequate use in administration, education and mass media will ensure its development, standardisation and modernisation.

As other languages and concerned societies, the Kashmiri language and society loo are very closely related. The language reflects the socio-cultural patterns, ethos, values, beliefs etc. of the people who speak it natively. Its speakers fall into two religious streams: Muslims and Hindus. There are minor dialectical variations in the speech of the two communities. The variations are mutually intelligible and can be termed as different styles of speech. There are certain regional and social dialects, which show variations primarily at the phonological and lexical levels. The socio-semantic variations do not hamper the communication between the people belonging to different areas and social stratification. The illustrations of the use of personal names, surnames, nicknames, kinship terms, modes of address and modes of greetings show that the language represents the social and cultural patterns of the Kashmiri society. The Kashmiri society too is adequately reflected in the use of Kashmiri language in its various as illustrated above.

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ON THE CRITICAL LIST...

Kashmiri is a potential candidate for the list of languages that are passing through the stages of endangerment, decay and ultimate demise. We can already see the decay in the migrant camps, in the diasporic context in India and the melting pot cultures of other countries.

The efforts of the rescue brigades seem to be doomed.

CHAPTER 13

KASHMIRI LITERARY CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Braj B. Kachru

INTRODUCTION OF AUTHOR

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His book The Alchemy of English (1986) *was awarded the Joint First Prize in the Duke of Edinburgh Book Competition. He has authored and edited more than twenty volumes and published more than a hundred research papers.*

He was President of the American Association for Applied Linguistics (1984) and President of the International Association for World Englishes (1997-99).

INTRODUCTION[1]

The literary culture in Kashmiri has developed over the centuries in essentially two vital contexts of contact: cultural and linguistic. These two types of interactions have not always been harmonious or indeed welcome. The ultimate result of this contact and convergence, however, is the development of a literary culture in Kashmiri that embodies linguistic, contextual, and canonical characteristics of a "contact language" and "contact literature".

It is, therefore, conceptually and methodologically insightful to describe the small corpus of Kashmiri literary creativity and the medium of such creativity, the Kashmiri language, with reference to three interrelated regional characteristics: linguistic, sociolinguistic and literary.

This trimodal approach, then, views Kashmiri literary culture and language — and its diversity — within overall AREAL features of the subcontinent. There is already considerable agreement that the subcontinent forms a LINGUISTIC AREA[4] and a SOCIOLINGUISTIC AREA.[5] The term LITERARY AREA has gained currency to conceptualize, for example, the *Indianess* in Indian literatures[6].

In characterizing India as a literary area, the focus has been on identifying shared underlying features of two or more literatures within a rigorous descriptive methodology. Foremost, this focus has centered on tracing major canons of cultural and literary traditions that contributed, as Chatterji (1963: 118) says, to "the real integration of India into one single entity, in spite of some basic and fundamental racial, linguistic and cultural diversities." In Chatterji's view then, this integration has taken place "through the world of the epics and the puranas and the philosophical literature of Sanskrit (especially Vedanta as supplemented by Islamic Tasawwuf), in the ancient and medieval times..." Second, this focus has sought to present a typology of shared assumptions about literary creativity—structural and linguistic features of genres and styles. These shared characteristics are evident in the subcontinental literatures from the earliest period to the modern period—characteristics that reveal how a literary movement, religious or secular, passes from one language area to another "by study and adaptation of the original [texts] rather than regular translation" (Chatterji 1963: 133). Finally, a third element of this focus is the critical efforts to describe *externally* (foreign) and *internally* (native) initiated innovations that have contributed to shared areal characteristics, for example, the process of Sanskritization and the Persianization, the Progressive movement *(pragativād)*[7] and relatively recent Englishization of literatures and languages.

The above digression indicates the context within which I shall discuss the Kashmiri literary culture and language. There are two additional points that may be mentioned here—and will be discussed later—which I believe are appropriate to this discussion.

First is that numerically Kashmiri is a *minority* language (and Kashmiri literature a minority literature). Second is that the concept of *literacy,* and presuppositions associated with this terms require redefinition if they are to have explanatory power in multilingual societies. A salient feature of such societies is that they functionally comprise a variety of *literacy types,* sometimes with multiple unrelated scripts associated with each literacy type as in Kashmiri, Konkani, and Tibetan.

Kashmiri language is called *Kashur,* by its native speakers. In other languages (e.g., Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Tamil), the language is called *Kashmiri* or *Kashmiri).* The *Kashur* and its dialects are spoken in an approximately 10,000 square mile area in the bowl-shaped valley of the Kashmir Province in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. English variant spellings include *kaschemiri, cashmiri, Cashmeeree, käc 'miri.* The state borders with linguistically and culturally diverse regions, not all of which have traditionally been congenial to the inhabitants of Kashmir. In this northernmost state of the Republic of India live a small percentage of India's population—just 0.8 percent. But that figure is misleading as Kashmir is geographically and culturally of strategic importance, and during the post-Independence era of the subcontinent it has been a political tinderbox. Kashmir also has a fascinating historical legacy and cultural pluralism that is often characterized as *Kashmiriyat (Kashmiriness)*—an elusive term evoking a rich pluralistic literary, cultural and aesthetic tradition of the Pandits and Muslims of the Valley.

In the larger configuration of languages in India, the majority of Kashmiri speakers live primarily in the Kashmiri Valley, also referred to as the Kashmir *maṇdala,* a term that demands an explanation. The concept *maṇdala* has been used since the ancient times for the Valley: In liturgical terms it means a "circle" or a geographical zone. In the long history of Kashmir the *mandala* concept has been used in a variety of art forms. In Kumari's view (1968:131) *mandala* was synonymous with *deśa, viṣaya, rājya,* and *rāṣṭra.*

The ritualistic connotation of *mandala* is discussed by Bhattacharya (1975 II: 911-912) among the "types of icons and murtis":

> The *maṇdala* are consecrated to the advent of the *Grace* of the Deity. These, too, are geometrically designed into a variety of'courts' and 'yards,' pockets' and 'arenas.' The actual drawing itself becomes an exercise in attention, and cultivation of the faculties of art, aesthetics and sense of grace. The concentration demanded in the drawing of a *mandala* with care and exactness has to be seen to be believed. The outcome is certainly a piece of art.

In Kashmir *maṇdala* there are 3,174,684 speakers of this somewhat isolated and almost orphaned language that traditionally has been deprived of any serious state patronage. There is additionally a smaller number of Kashmiri speakers within the boundaries of the state in the Doda district, Bashili, and Riasi. The diaspora varieties of the language are used in various degrees of diminishing competence by Kashmiris in other parts of India and in parts of Asia. There is now also a small number of diasporic Kashmiris in Europe and the United States.

In parts of Pakistan, as a Pakistani scholar, Rahman observes (1996:225-226), "there are pockets of Kashmiri-speaking people in Azad Kashmir [Pakistan-occupied Kashmir] and elsewhere..." Rahman adds that the process of language shift is in progress among Kashmiri speakers in Pakistan too, as:

> most of the them [Kashmiris] are gradually shifting to other languages such as the local Pahari and Mirpuri

> which are dialects of Punjabi...Most literate people use Urdu since, in both Azad and Indian-held Kashmir, Urdu rather than Kashmiri is the official language of government.

One might ask: What iconic status does Kashmiri have for the identity of *Kashmiriyat* on either side of its Indian and Pakistan borders? In India, even those Islamic groups in Kashmir who aggressively oppose the current political status of the state, particularly that of its Kashmiri-speaking province, have articulated no serious identity with the Kashmiri language. The vast chain of *madrasas* (Islamic schools) in the Kashmir province do not consider Kashmiri a medium of empowerment for distinct identity construction. Their focus is on Arabic and Urdu. The situation in Pakistan is nearly identical. In Pakistan, as Rahman (1996: 226) observes, "the Kashmiri-speaking community has been far too scattered and ineffective to organize a language movement."

One obvious reason for this ineffectiveness, Rahman continues, is that, "decision-makers in Azad Kashmir are either Punjabi bureaucrats of Punjab or locals who speak dialects of Punjabi. Thus, its is only for propaganda reasons they pretend to patronize Kashmiri." (1996:226).

In the case of India, however, the 'decision-makers' and educational policy planners are Kashmiris themselves, and in spite of that the situation is not much different from what Rahman tells us about Pakistan. In his response to the claim of a Pakistani "writer on Kashmir affairs," Mir Abdul Aziz, that "Kashmiri [language] remains a stranger in its own country" (Aziz; 1988), Rahman argues:

> [t]he fact, however, is that Kashmiri's 'own country' is not Azad Kashmir but the Vale of Kashmir which is occupied by India. If the Vale joins Pakistan or attains independence, Kashmiri would have a brighter chance of coming into its own. But that is a matter of speculation, (see also Aziz 1983).

In diaspora, whether in parts of India or abroad, the language is going through gradual attrition due to the impact of languages of wider communication, mainly Hindi Urdu, Punjabi and English, and the resultant language shit — that is the acquisition by Kashmiri speakers of functionally more dominant languages that ultimately causes the decay and "death" of Kashmiri. We notice this shift in major metropolitan cities of India where a significant number of Pandits have reolcated in the post-1980s and earlier (see Bhatt; 1989).

Kashmiri speakers in 1941, 1961, 1971 and 1981 Census Reports

Year	J&K State	Kashmiri Province	Jammu Province	Other parts of the state[7]
1941	15,49,460	13,69,537	1,78,390	1174±323[8]
1961	18,96,149	17,17,259	1,78,281[9]	609[10]
1971	24,53,430	21,75,588	2,77,070	772[11]
1981	31,33,146	28,06,441	3,28,229	1,476[12]

(Note that no census data was collected in Kashmir in 1951 and 1991.)

We have no firm figures about Kashmiris living in diasporic contexts beyond India. Kaul in *the Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA) Directory 2001* (2001:3) says:

> It [KOA] has information on about 1450 families, of whom 1070 are in the USA and the remaining are in Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, and other African, Asian, European Countries...
>
> The number of families in the USA has increased steadily from 250 in 1985, to 340 in 1992, to 620 in 1995, to 1070 in 2000. *It is our belief that there are at least 200 to 400 more families in the USA who do not appear in this directory.* (Emphasis added).

It should be noted that this Directory primarily provides figures for Kashmiri Pandit families, not for Kashmiri Muslims.

REGIONALITY AND CONTACT

The major Kashmiri-speaking area in the state of Jammu and Kashmir has a very sensitive and complex regional location. In the north, the state borders Afghanistan, the former Soviet countries, and China; in the east it borders Tibet; and in the west Pakistan. The Kashmiri-speaking area is surrounded by distinct linguistic, cultural, and political zones. This configuration of *contact* zones and their impact on Kashmiri language, culture, and literature, add various cultural and linguistic layers to the region.

These language contact zones are produced by contiguity with typologically distinct language types: a Dardic language, Shina, in the North; Balti, Ladakhi and other Tibeto-Burman languages in the East; Pahari and a variety of dialects of Punjabi in the West; and Dogri and other Pahari dialects in the South. All these languages have in various degrees converged with Kashmiri, or with its dialects, particularly at what are termed *transition* zones.

It is, however, the more geographically distant languages that by the middle of the 14th century gradually had acquired the status of languages of literary creativity in Kashmir. The domains of function of native Kashmiri were primarily restricted to the home and non-formal interactions. The language never overcame that marginality, and never was assigned elevated or formal functions.

The languages of literary culture in Kashmir at various periods of its history have been, essentially, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, and much later—and to a smaller extent—English. The Kashmiri language was never in competition with any of these "elevated" languages of wider communication. In fact, attitudinally the Kashmiri language had a lower status than other languages of power, and functionally it had very restricted domains. This linguistic choice was again a consequence of the marginality of the natives of the state, the status of their language, and indeed the attitude of Kashmiris themselves toward their own language.

The language of creativity and literary discourse before Islam's arrival in the Valley was Sanskrit, which occupied almost all elite formal roles of discourse—philosophy (e.g. *Trika darśana)*, poetics (e.g., *rasa)*, historical narratives (e.g., Kalhana's *Rājataranginí* 1150 AD?), satire (e.g., *Ksemendra,* 11th century), and translations.The Sanskrit manuscripts were mostly written in the Sharada script.

The predominance of Sanskrit in formal discourse continued until the middle of the 14th century when Islam was firmly established in the Valley. At first the role of Sanskrit overlapped with Persian which ultimately acquired the functional domains of administration, law, and literary creativity. The hegemony of Persian lasted for more than four centuries. Finally during the Dogra period, Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925) gradually introduced Urdu in those roles, with some functions assigned to English.

The Islamic period initiated the Persianization of Kashmiri in more than one sense. In Kashmiri literary culture a phase began that developed into 'Kashmiri Persian' and includes over three hundred writers and a thousand critical and literary works (see, e.g., Tikku 1971). The ancestral Sanskrit language and local creativity in Kashmiri—whatever little there was of it—gradually became peripheral. Persian thus became yet another language of access for the Persian-knowing Pandit community and for Muslims. The Pandits used Persian to study their own Hindu religious and cultural texts such as Mahābhārata, Bhāgvata, Rāmāyana, Shivāpurana, and the Bhagwat Gātā. Pushp (1996: 22) observes that the non-Muslims

> .. enjoyed reading Persian classics like the Mathnavi of Moulana Rumi, the Shahnama of Firdusi and the Sikandarnama of Nizami. These used to be taught in the *maktabs* often run by Kashmiri Pandit *Akhuns*...

The Pandit identity with the medium, Pushp observes, was so close that they used Persian to produce manuals so that literate Kashmiris could read about Hindu rituals *(karmakānda),* astrology *(jyotishāshdstra),* and the indigenous medical system *(āyurveda)* in Persian. The Pandits ran *maktabs,* which are traditionally associated with Muslim education and Islamic teaching. This identity with Persian continued until English also gradually became part of the linguistic repertoire of educated Kashmiris. In this interplay of language, politics and power, the Kashmiri language never received patronage from the powerful and the court, except for a short duration during the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470). That picture has not altered even now in any serious sense (see Warikoo 1996).

CONFRONTING REGIONALITY

The literary culture of Kashmir has been nurtured within the regionality that confronts this speech community: It is evident in language attitudes, language choices, and indeed in Kashmiris' responses to the functional power of the languages the community has encountered in its history. However, regionality contributed to the multilingual milieu that produced several types of multilingual elites in Persian, Urdu, Hindi, and English.

An *elitist* multilingualism in various degrees penetrated down into the Kashmiri society. We see a *bilinguals' literary creativity* in Persian, in Urdu, in Hindi, in Punjabi, and in a very restricted sense —and much later—in English. This *bilinguality*, is evident in multiple layers of convergence in the Kashmiri language and literature, in the development of a *diglossic* situation in which two or more varieties of Kashmiri co-exist, for example, Sanskritized, Persianized and Englishized varieties: Bilinguality is also evident in the extension of the *style range* of Kashmiri.

The elevated styles are marked by the types of foregrounding in each style: *Sanskritization* in terms of the Sanskritic substratum, especially the vocabulary and the underlying literary canon related to the Sanskritic tradition. And *Persianization* in terms of the extensive borrowings at various levels from the Persian language and the Perso-Arabic literary styles and canons.

The colloquial or *neutral* style refers to what Śitikānthа Āchārya (13th century?) has called *sarvagōcara deśī-bhāṣā* (the native language intelligible to all), in his treatise on an esoteric *Tāntric* sect entitled *Mahānāya Prakāś* (Illumination of Highest Attainment or Discipline). We can apply Śaitikāṇṭha Ācharyā's yardstick in retrospect and say that what he perhaps had in mind is a variety of Kashmiri that is unmarked by the Sanskritized or Persianized foregrounding.

In literary creativity and in social interaction it is, however, not uncommon among Kashmiris to engage in style shift and style alteration. The strategy of hybridization—mixing of two or more languages—is part of Kashmiri discourse and indeed of its literary creativity, as it is indeed of other major literary traditions of the subcontinent. Kashmirs traditionally acquired their bi-or-multilingual competence from multiple sources—from sacred texts, from religious discourses in temples and mosques, form interaction with pilgrims to Hindu and Muslim sacred places and from tourists visiting the Valley. Thus, in acquiring this 'literacy' a written text was not necessarily the main resource.

This tradition of a bilinguality cultivated from such sources is evident in Parmananda (1791-1874), a *bhakti* poet, who learnt some Persian from the village *mulla* in Bhavan (Matan), Sanskrit from the discourses on sacred Hindu texts, Shaiva philosophy from a Pandit, and the lore of Lalleshwari (born around 1335) and Sheikh-Nur-ud-Din (1376-1438) from the oral tradition of the village and beyond. His biographer and translator into English, Zinda Kaul "Masterji"—himself a poet of distinction—believes that Parmanada's contribution "...surpasses all his known predecessors in the technique of meter and rhyme, and all excepting only Lalla in mysticism...his didactic poems and even his psalms and litanies have not yet been surpassed" (1941:19).

Parmananda, thus, provides a good example of creative bilinguality that has been one of the traditions of Kashmiri literary culture. Consider the following three example of Parmananda's language shift and mixing. First is the Sanskritization of his style in his poetry as in the following *pada* (foot of a measure of verse):

karmɨbhūmikāyi dizi dharmuk bala
santoshi byāli bhavi ānada phal

Zinda Kaul does not translate this *pada* word for word, instead he transcreates the underlying idea in English:

> Strengthen the field of action with the loam of righteousness, then sow the seed of contentment which will yield the harvest of bliss: (1955:40—45).

In this *pada* of the poem, there is only one lexical item, the verb *dizi* ('should give'), that does not produce the stylistic effect of Sanskritization. All other words *(karma, bhumi, dharma, bala, santosa, ananda, phala)* are from Sanskrit, and semantically most of these words have cultural connotations related to the Hindu texts and traditions. Parmananda metaphorically constructs "the spiritual ideas," as Zinda Kaul says, "in the familiar language of agricultural processes..." (1958: 40-45).

A native Muslim Faquir, Wahab Sahib, Zinda Kaul tells us, "...playfully complained that Parmananda had written all his poems in "Hindu Kashmiri," which was intelligible to Hindus only, and nothing for the benefit of his Muslim friends (Kaul, 1958: 32—33).

This challenge of the Faquir unfolded the second stylistic shift of Parmananda, that of deSanskritization:

panctre bhāglis karārdādas,
vadas zyāda na zł kam.

In this short verse, the agricultural imagery is maintained; however, the style is different. Zinda Kaul renders it into English as, " in the contract of division (or produce) in the ratio of five parts to three, the agreement has to be filled exactly-—neither more nor less can be accepted" (1958:32-33).

The third stylistic shift demonstrates the smattering of Punjabi and Hindi that Parmanada had learnt from the Sikh sacred text Granth Sahib, and itinerant sadhus:

bāp hamārā kṛṣṇ huā hō pita# tumhārā nand,
āpas mẽ kyā pahuncōgā ham āp karōdardām

> "Thou art my father, being named Krishna; but Thy father is Nanda (which is my name). What is our mutual relationship then?
>
> This Thou alone canst calculate. (1958:51)

This convention of stylistic shift— and mixing of codes— has become one of the most effective resources for creativity in Kashmiri, particularly in the Modern Period (1900-1947) and the Renaissance (1947-1985).

The mixing of languages indeed was only one face of this convergence. It is also evident in the representation of Sanskrit and Persian metrical patterns, as well as in the classical imagery of *gul-o-bulbul* (the rose and the nightingale) that dominated literary creativity until the Progressive movement influenced young Kashmiri writers.

It was at two conferences in Lucknow (1936) and in Allahabad (1938) that India's progressive writers outlined the agenda for the Progressive movement. This movement clearly reflected the ideological and social impact of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. But in a serious sense this movement did not impact Kashmiri literary culture until the mid 1940s.

In her assessment of this cultural and linguistic blending of traditions and their implication for the creativity of two religious groups in Kashmir, Cook (1958:28) points out that:

> ...the pandits composed a new Shaiva literature in Persian verse. The classical Persian *gazal* became the ode to Shiva, Lord of the La Makan, Spaceless Space. The technical vocabulary of Erfan suited their purposes perfectly, and morning prayers were conducted in a Persian which listening neighbours could not distinguish from songs of the "Orafa." Whatever position they won for themselves in India when forced out of Kashmir by Persian-speaking invaders, the pandit emigres continued to compose their Persian Shaiva odes.

This convergence cut across the religious divide, as in *Prakasa Ramayana* (see, Koul 1974:273—277), and was not restricted only to the Persian infusion of lexis and grammar but beyond that as pointed out by Grierson (see, Grierson and Barnett, 1920:144):

> ...in Kashmir, two distinct metrical systems are known and cultivated. The first is that used for formal works, such as epic poems and the like. Here Persian meters, with many irregularities and licenses, are employed. Numerous examples will be found in the edition of Mahmud Gami's *Yūsuf Zulaikhā...In* that case we have a poem written by a Muslim in the Persian character, and the use of Persian meters is expected, but we find the same system in epics written by Hindūs. For instance, a great portion Śivaparaiṇaya of Kṛṣṇa Rāzdān is in well-known *hazaj* metre, and the same is employed in the narrative portions *of the Śrīrāmāvatāra-carita* of Dēvakara-prasāda Bhaṭṭa...

The earlier major philosophical traditions of Kashmiri literary culture include: Shaivaite, the Bhakti, and the Sufi traditions. The innovative and popular ceremonial traditions include the *vatsan* and *lōl* traditions. I shall not go into a detailed discussion of these here (For references, see Kachru 1981; 9-13).

In the following sections (3 to 5) I shall instead contextualize Kashmiri literary culture within the linguistic antecedents of the language.

LINGUISTIC AFFINITY OF KASHMIRI

The origin and linguistic affinity of the language of Kashmiris has been a point of prolonged scholarly debates surrounding one major issue: whether Kashmiri is affiliated to the Indo-Aryan or Dardic family of languages. The central points of this ongoing debate are outlined here.

In Grierson's now outdated view (e.g., 1915 and 1919), Kashmiri belongs to a distinct group within the Indo-Aryan branch of Indo-European. The other group members being Indo-Aryan and Iranian. Grierson considers Kashmiri a "mixed language" of "a Sanskritic form of speech." He proposed that Kashmiri belongs to the Dard group of the Pisacha family allied to Shina. The Dardic substratum, asserts Grierson, forms the basis of the Kashmiri sound system, word formation, grammar and prosodic systems. He identifies several linguistic features that are "peculiar" of Pisacha and which Pisacha shares with Eranian [Iranian]. Therefore, Grierson argues, Kashmiri must be treated as a Dardic language. These characteristic (or what he considers "peculiar") features of Kashmiri include: absence of voiced aspirates (such as Hindi *gh, dh, bh);* consonantal epenthesis (change in a consonant under the influence of the following vowel or semi-vowel) aspiration or breathy release of stops in final position (as in *p, b, t, d);* absence of vowel alteration or gemination of Prakrit borrowings; non-deletion of *t* between vowels; presence of a *(ah)* as a marker of indefinitization; presence of large number of post-positions peculiar to Pisacha; the similarity of the numerical system with Pisacha; a three-fold system of demonstrative pronouns *(yi* "this," *hu* "that" (within sight) or *su* "that" (out of sight); a three-term system for the past tense; and differences in the word order.

In its sentence structure in many respects Kashmiri is identical to Indo-Aryan language in the formation of the passive voice, in subject-verb agreement, in marking ergative case (where, in certain tenses, a subject of a transitive verb take a special case-marking [ergative], and the verb agrees not with its subject but instead with its object, which is in the nominative case). The word order in Kashmiri however, is distinct from Indo-Aryan languages: finite verb (that is the verb marked for tense) occurs in the second position following the verb. Note, for example, Hindi-Urdu (Indo-Aryan) *Sheela khā rahī hai* "Sheela is eating", and Kashmiri *Sheela cha khyavān.* In Kashmiri the auxiliary *(cha)* marks the agreement features and follows the subject (Sheela), as in English. It has been argued that this grammatical feature is shared by Kashmiri with languages such as Dutch, German, Icelandic, and Yiddish.

Grierson concedes that Kashmiri has been "powerfully influenced by Indian culture and literature'" and that this influence is evident in its vocabulary. However, he is emphatic that, for example, some of the "commonest words," seldom borrowed and retained for long periods in Kashmiri, correspond to Shina words and are of Pisacha origin, including earlier numerals and kinship terms such as those for 'father' and 'mother'.

Grierson's position has over a period evoked essentially two types of responses. One group of scholars (e.g., Chatterji 1963) seem to adopt the middle path. On this question Chatterji makes two observations: First, that in spite of the Dardic impact on the Kashmiri people and their language, Kashmiri "...became a part of Sanskritic culture. The Indo-Aryan Prakrits and Apabhramsha from the Midland and from Northern Punjab profoundly modified the Dardic bases of Kashmiri..." (1963). Second that the question of the linguistic affiliation of Kashmiri still is not settled and remains undetermined.

The second group of scholars on the basis of extensive fieldwork and comparative textual and typological studies completely rejects Grierson's hypothesis. This research raises serious doubts even about the linguistic validity of Grierson's conceptualization of the Dardic or Pisacha language group. With reference to Kashmiri, Fussman (1972), among others, says that the denomination "Dardic language" should not strictly speaking be applied to Kashmiri

("Inverssement *stricto sensu la* denomination langue darde ne devrait pas sappliquer au [Kashmiri]": 1972:11). This view, from various perspectives and degrees of discussion, has been presented by, among others, Pushp (1996:16) who says that "he [Grierson] seems to have gone astray at least on two counts." One of those Pushp considers "the classification of the Kashmiri language as Dardic". (See also, Ganju 1991, Masica 1991, Pushp 1996, Toshkhani 1996 and Zakharyn 1984).

THE DARDIC LANGUAGE CONTROVERSY

What complicates the matter further is a larger question about the Dardic languages. The term Dardic traditionally indicates a group of languages or dialects spoken by the Dards, inhabitations of Dardistān [the place of the Dards]. The Dards were of Aryan origin and converted to Islam in the 14th century. The region of Dardistan covers the north of Pakistan and northern Kashmir, in Chitral, parts of the Panjkara river, and the hilly areas of Swat. The word Dard, meaning "a mountain," is found in the Puranas and in Kalhana's *Rájataraṇginī,* (River of Kings)

The Dardic languages, as a group, share no linguistic features that distinguish them from the Indo-Aryan languages. The term is generally used for "a bundle of aberrant IA [Indo-Aryan] hill languages." (Morgenstierne 1961:139). These geographically isolated languages thus escaped contact with the Indo-Aryans of the *Madhyadēsha* (midland). Dardic is a geographical expression referring primarily to the regional location of these languages without any connotation of shared linguistic features; thus, it is not used in a phylogenetic sense (e.g. Fussman 1972: 11; Strand 1973: 301-302). Grierson's (1919) Pisacha nomenclature for this group also is contestable since he has not made convincing arguments that these languages are derived from the Pisacha Prakrits, nor that these languages are spoken by the descendents of the Pisachas. The connotations of this term Pisacha also are questionable since in common parlance and in Indian mythology Pisacha means a cannibal demon. And even now, in colloquial Kashmiri, the word continues to be used in that sense. In fairness to Grierson, it should be added that he cautions us that "a tribe speaking a Piśaca language is not necessarily of Piśaca descent."

These languages, however, are of considerable typological, sociolinguistic and cultural interest. There is extensive and continuing discussion of their linguistic grouping and affiliation which remains unresolved. The primary question is: are these languages Indo-Aryan or non-Indo-Aryan? In response to this question there are two hypotheses, as discussed below: that these languages belong to a distinct linguistic group called the Dardic group or that these languages belong to the Indo-Aryan group.

THE DISTINCT DARDIC GROUP HYPOTHESIS

In Grierson's now obsolete view, the Dardic languages form a third group, a sub-family of the Indo-Aryan branch of Indo-European (Grierson 1919: 1-10), the other two sub-families being Indo-Aryan and Iranian. In his view, the Pisacha languages, including the Shina-Khowar group, "occupy a position intermediate between the Sanskritic languages of India proper and Eranian languages farther to the west." These languages, Grierson emphasizes, are "neither of Indian nor of Eranian origin, but form a third branch of the Aryan stock"(1906). However, he agrees that the Dardic languages share many features with the Sanskritic languages and share still others with the Iranian family of languages. The Dardic family, he observes, thus separated from the parent stem after it branched forth from the Indian languages, "but before the Eranian languages had developed all their peculiar characteristics" (ibid.).

Grierson's controversial classification provides the following major groups of the Dardic languages:

1. The Kafir group (including Bashgali, Wai-ala, Wasi-veri, Ashkund, Kalasha, Gawar- bati, and Pashai);
2. The Khowar (or Chitrali) group; and
3. The Dard group (including Shina, Kashmiri, Kashtwari, Siraji, Rambani, and Kohistani). Kohistani also includes Garwi, Torwali, and Maiya).

This classification, however, is now considered flawed on linguistic and other grounds. (Fussman 1972: 11-14; Masica 1991: 461). The terrain of the Dardic region has been much more accessible since Grierson's study; therefore, more insightful field work and research in the region has been possible. It is on the basis of such research that Masica, for example, asserts that Grierson's view on the Dardic languages is "now definitely obsolete, and incorrect also in its details, but unfortunately often still given in works of reference" (1991:461). These concerns were originally raised mainly by Morgenstierne.

THE INDO-ARYAN HYPOTHESIS

Georg Morgenstierne, after extensive research in the region, claims that there is considerable evidence that the Dardic languages are Indo-Aryan. However, he is less assertive of the Kafir (also called Nuristarii) languages. In his view, the Dardic languages are purely of Indo-Aryan origin and can be traced to a form of speech that closely resembles Vedic. Because these languages did not pass through the Prakrit stage they have preserved archaisms and other features. These features include three sibilants, several types of clusters of consonants, and archaic or antiquated vocabulary. According to Morgenstierne, the fact that there are archaisms present in Dardic that are lost in later Indo-Aryan, or that there is loss of aspiration in Dardic, is not at all evidence for a hypothesis that the languages are not Indo-Aryan.

The Dardic languages, says Morgenstierne, "contain absolutely no features which cannot be derived from old IA [Indo-Aryan]" (1961). Morgenstierne concludes that Dardic languages (Kashmiri, Shina, Indus Kohistani, Khowar, Kalsha, Pashai, Tirahi) are Indo-Aryan languages (see also Ganju 1991).

The Kafir (Nuristātī) languages (Kati, Waigali, Ashkun, and to some extent Dameli) present a different profile. These languages are in a middle position, although "very heavily overlaid by IA (Dardic) words and forms, these dialects have retained several decidedly un-Indian features" (1961:139). There is, says Morgenstierne, "not a single common feature distinguishing Dardic, as a whole, from the rest of the IA [Indo-Aryan] languages, and the Dardic area itself is intersected by a network of isoglosses, often of historical interest as indicating ancient lines of communication as well as barriers" (1961:139).

The controversy of the two major positions is summarized, by among others, Fussman (1972) and Strand (1973). The literature agrees with the major position of Morgenstierne and his evidence that Kafir languages retain some archaic features of (perhaps) proto-Indo-Aryan. These languages have preserved several distinctive "non-Indian" characteristics, including the loss of aspiration, since aspiration is not distinctive in the Iranian languages. The languages preserve a distinction between palatalized velar stops and IE labio-velars, a distinction that no longer exists in Vedic Sanskrit. They also maintain an archaic trait of the dental /s/ after /u/.

Whatever advances have been made in the study of these languages, there is still a paucity of research and empirical data. There is a lack of reliable criteria for the demographic and numerical figures, as well as of typological and comparative studies. The earlier studies, essentially lexical lists and sketchy grammatical outlines (compiled around the 1830s) are not very insightful and often also of questionable authenticity. A majority of these languages and dialects have small numbers of users and no literary tradition, with the exception of Kashmiri, which, as mentioned earlier, has a literary tradition that goes back as far as the 13th century. For details see e.g., Azad 1959, 1962, 1963 [3 vols. in Urdu], Kaul 1969; Kachru 1981, Toshakhani 1985 (in Hindi).

VARIATION IN KASHMIRI

The language variation within this small Kashmiri speech community is divided on several axes. The regional variation recognizes three major groups: *marāzi* (that of the southern and southeastern region); *kamrāzī* (that of the northern and northwestern region); and the variety used in Srinagar and some of its surrounding environs, which is traditionally considered as standard variety. The only dialect outside the valley is Kashtawari (Kishtwari) spoken in Kashtwar, a town (and a valley) in Southeast Kashmir along the upper Chinab river. Kashtwari has deep substratum of the Pahari and the Lahanda dialects and is written in Takrī characters. The other regional dialects are only partially influenced by Kashmiri. These are spoken in a transitional zone and include Poguli, spoken in the valleys of Pogul, Parisian, Sar ; Siraji, spoken in the town of Doda on the river Chinab; and Rambani spoken in a small area between Srinagar and Jammu. Rambani has restricted functions in a transition zone and contains features of Dōgrī, Kashmiri and Sirājī.

A distinction is also made between the village variety *(gāma kashur)* and the variety *(shahra kashur)* spoken in the summer capital of the state, Srinagar. The Sanskritized and Persianized varieties have been recognized on the bases of the types of lexicalization, the presence of distinct phonological and morphological features, and types of discoursal strategies. These differences were characterized by Grierson as "Hindu Kashmiri" and "Muslim Kashmiri." In recent years this somewhat controversial dichotomy has been revisited in literature (see, e.g., Kachru 1973: 7-11; and Pushp 1996:16). It can be argued that there are some markers in pronunciation, vocabulary, and word formation that have traditionally been associated with Hindu or Muslim communities. The following are examples of each type.

Pronunciation

The two communities share one phonological system; however, the differences are in terms of the substitution (e.g. in Srinagar Kashmiri [r] alternates with [r] in the speech of Muslims, though in the villages it is shared by both the communities). Note the following variation between what Grierson somewhat inaccurately labeled Hindu Kashmiri and Muslim Kashmiri in variety 1 (Hindu Kashmiri) and variety 2 (Muslim Kashmiri).

(a) vowels

(i) central vowel → front vowel : (V1) rɨkh 'line', tɨkh 'run', khɨn' 'nasal mucus; (V2) rikh, tikh, khin')

(ii) high central vowel → low central vowel : (V1: g ə̄:th 'eagle', d əh 'ten', k əhvɨ 'tea'; V2: gā̃th, dah, kahvɨ)

(iii) central vowel → back vowel : (V1: m ə̄ǰ 'mother'; V2 mōǰ)

(iv) initial back vowel → central vowel : (V1: ōlav 'potatoes'; V2: ə̄lav)

(b) consonants

(i) v → ph : (V1: kho(h) vur 'left', ho(h)vur 'wife's parents'; V2: khophur, hophur)

(ii) initial cr → c' : (V1: brōr 'cat', krūr 'well'; V2: byōr, kyūr)

(iii) r → r : (V1 gur 'horse', yōr 'here', hōr 'there'; V2 gur, yōṛ, hōṛ)

Vocabulary

The dichotomy of Sanskritization (SK) and Persianization (PK) is not necessarily always a basis for the religious differences. There are some Sanskrit words which are present in Muslim Kashmiri and less frequent in Hindu Kashmiri (e.g., tsəndɨr 'moon').

Variety 1

athɨčhalun 'to wash hands'; bagvān 'god'; bohgun 'cooking vessel', čāy 'tea', darɨm 'religion', gandụn 'betrothal'; gosə̄n' 'holy man', khōs 'cup', krūd 'anger', mədrēr 'sugar', mahrā 'sir', mɨthɨr 'urine', marɨd 'a man', mōl 'father'; neni 'meat', namaskār 'greeting', pōn' 'water', pāph 'sin', pɔn' 'good deed', pəǰāmɨ 'trousers', prān 'soul', rač̆h 'amulet', sokrɨvār 'Friday', sirī 'sun'; sorɨg 'paradise', sopun 'dream', thāl 'dish', vurɨbal 'kitchen for a feast', zukām 'influenza'.

Variety 2

athɨ pəṭhrun, khɔdā, pafīlɨ, kəhvɨ, dīn, nišə̄n', phəkīr, vāv, pyālɨ, gɔsɨ, khanḍ, haz, idrār, mohn'uv, bab, nāṭɨ (or m'āz), salām, āb, gonah, savāb, yezārɨ, ruh, tə̄vɨz, ǰumah, akhtāb, ǰanath, khāb, trə̄m' vāzɨvān, nəzlɨ.

Word Formation

The differences are primarily in terms of the sources (Sanskrit and Persian), or in frequency of use by speakers of one variety as opposed to the other variety. Note, for example, the use of the conjunction *hargah* ('if') in one variety, but not in Srinagar where the use of *agar* is more frequent. The following declension is restricted to Muslims in Srinagar, although shared by both the communities in the villages:

nɔm (fem.nɔmɨ), nɔmanhund, nɔman, nɔmav.

A word of caution is warranted about basing these variations exclusively on a religious dichotomy. In recent years—particularly after the 1940s—a process of LEVELING is in progress. The reasons for it are social, educational, increased mobility, and the establishment of Radio Kashmir (July 31, 1948) and later television. In the 1990s I noticed that in various interactional contexts between the Pandits and Muslim Kashmiris in Jammu, the Pandits tended to deemphasize the features that mark their variety in pronunciation, vocabulary and in discourse strategies. The distinct features that operate as religious-markers in George Grierson's data are now much less obvious. In other words, these features have been leveled. But that is only part of the story: There is now increased use of Persianization of Kashmiri in the written medium, and it is also evident in social interaction.

In several contexts of interaction this dichotomy between the Pandits and Muslims is misleading. The Sanskritization and Persianization, however, marks code-alteration for style shift and identity-marking as discussed in the above section. The same creative writer might use both these linguistics resources for stylistic effects, as in the Kashmiri poems composed by Parmananda, Zinda Kaul, and Ghulam Ahmad Mahjur to name just three poets.

THE AGONY OF SCRIPTS

In the choice of a script and in the maintenance and promotion of it for writing Kashmiri, political ideology and religious identities have played an important role. The Kashmiri language historically has been written in four scripts: the Sharda, the Devanagari, the Perso-Arabic, and the Roman. The Sharda script, traced back to the Brahmi (3rd cent. B.C.) was exclusively used by the Pandits of Kashmir; it closely resembles the Nagafi script and is now almost extinct, preserved mainly in manuscripts and horoscopes. The Perso-Arabic script, with several modifications, has been adopted by the state government as the official script of the language (see, Koul, 1995). A number of modified versions of the Devanagari and Roman scripts continue to be used in whatever little is published in the Kashmiri language—and it indeed is very little. The differences in various versions of each script are essentially in the use of the diacritic marks.

The Roman script was used by the Baptist missionaries of Serampore (Shrirampur) in Bengal for publishing the Kashmiri versions of the New Testament (1821) and selected parts of the Old Testament (1827, 1832). This script, in Chatterji's view (1954:77), would have been "the most reasonable and practical thing" for the Kashmiri language. The Perso-Arabic writing, Chatterji continues, "is not at all a satisfactory solution" It is, however, the Perso-Arabic script that has finally prevailed (see Kachru 1981: 6-7).

The above outline of the issues related to Kashmiri literary culture, its linguistic affiliation, and the cultural, attitudinal, and identity related consequences of its regionality tell only part of the complex story. One consequence of these contexts has been language dependence and language attrition. A major onslaught to *Kashmiriyat* came in the post 1980s—actually around 1988—when the Renaissance period of Kashmiri literary culture and literature came slowly to a halt. It was then that a variety of wellorganized fronts of militancy openly surfaced in the Valley. And even now it has not abated.

In 1942, a major poet of Kashmiri, Zinda Kaul recited a poem at a *mushayira* (poetic symposium) at Sri Pratap College, in Srinagar. The poem entitled, "Panin Kath" ("About ourselves") a Kashmiri remorsefully laments that "we have lost our mother tongue, whither can such men go?" But then, there is a prophetic strain of hope:

> I feel a hope rising in my heart that God willing, there will come a day when you will be glad to say:...Kashmiris are to be congratulated... They have found some good counselor and have discovered right path -- they were divided and had lost their tongue, but have now at last fond it by great effort.

At present there are no indicators—linguistic, cultural, attitudinal or political—that " the lost tongue," has been "found" by the Kashmiris in their native Kashmir or in the contexts of diaspora or their status as "migrants" from the state, as that term is used to describe Pandits by the Government of India and by India's media. The following sections discuss these issues related to the Kashmiri language within the contexts of language shift, decay, and death in the subcontinent and beyond.

SHIFT, DECAY, AND LAST WORDS

My use of this obituarial lexicon of decay, and last words, for Kashmiri is not merely a reflection on an imagined future. It indeed is a reality that we already are witnessing globally. One major initiator of language death is language SHIFT: That is, as mentioned earlier, acquisition of another language due to migration and or the functional, social, or economic power of one or more other languages.

The recent scholarly debate about and predictions of language death in the subcontinent and beyond has shown that a host of culturally and linguistically diverse human languages are passing through escalating critical stages of endangerment, decay, and ultimate demise. Is Kashmiri a potential candidate for that critical list? A quick answer is that 'yes' it is. Given the way events are unfolding, especially for the Pandits of Kashmir, it is only excessive optimism that will halt writing an obituarial note of the language. The indicators show that the next generation of the Kashmiri Pandits will witness a comatose Kashmiri language. And even at present Kashmiri is gradually qualifying to be on the list of "moribund" and "endangered" languages of the subcontinent.

The doomsday prediction worldwide is that in the present century we will witness the last words of 50 percent of the estimated 6,000 of the world's languages. This language extinction will be proportionately shared by India's 380 languages (if that estimated figure is not too conservative) including Kashmiri. This Cassandra-like attitude is based on a variety of indicators as reflected in the sociolinguistic history of the Kashmiri language.

The first indicator is the current status of the language in Kashmir and beyond its borders. The Eighth Schedule of India's Constitution recognizes Kashmiri as one of the national languages; however, the state has adopted Urdu as the official language, thus, constraining Kashmiri from developing any professional functional domains that would alter its status of being primarily a "home language." Whatever educational uses are made of the Kashmiri medium, it enjoys hardly any official functional uses, and the attitudes toward the language have not changed during the Post-1947 period. The inclusion of the Kashmiri language in the Eighth Schedule of India's constitution was not motivated by any numerical or functional considerations, but was primarily a political decision. The ongoing militancy in the state and its ideological, cultural and religious constructs of Kashmir and its people have further weakened the case for support and promotion of the Kashmiri language as an exponent *of Kashmiriyat.*

The second indicator is attitudinal: That is, how the creative writers in Kashmiri traditionally have agonized about the attitude and status of the language. It is true that the history of Kashmiri literature shows the excitement of writers when they finally settle on Kashmiri as their medium and at last find "their tongue" for literary creativity. However, we see that a majority of important Kashmiri poets first experimented with Urdu, Persian, Hindi, and some with English. Ghulam Ahmad Mahjur considered Kashmiri a "backward language though he played the most important role in its literary revival. Dina Nath Nadim in 1974 candidly confessed that, "My language was Kashmiri, but we were ashamed of writing in Kashmiri. We were not just ashamed; we didn't know how to write in the language." The story of other leading Kashmiri writers is not different and the situation has not significantly altered.

The Kashmiris have historically given the status of literary, cultivated, or elitist languages and literatures to Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu and Hindi, in recent years, to English. One earlier Kashmiri Persian poet, Lachman Raina (d.1989), expresses this attitude in an often-quoted *masnavi:*

Writing verse in Kashmiri
is groping in the dark.
If you would shine as a candle-flame,
write in Persian verse;
you would merely waste your talent if
you write in Kashmiri.
For you would not the jasmine hide
in a nettle bush,
nor edible oil or spices waste
on a dish of mallow wild.

But times have changed and Persian is
no longer read;
and radish and sugar-loaf is
relished alike. (See Kaul, 1969:175)

In the 1940s, we notice a tone of reflection and agony on the status of Kashmiri. We see this agony in Mahjur's elder contemporary Zinda Kaul, whose poem, *Painy Kath* (About Ourselves), I have mentioned earlier. In this poem, a sympathetic non-Kashmiri chides a Kashmiri in these words:

You are wasting time sitting at the shore,

while other nations are taking to boats eager to cross over.

To which the Kashmiri responds:

We are like a house divided against itself, and have lost our mother tongue.

Whither can such men go? The wise have said that food prepared by (disagreeing)

partners goes to dogs (since each thinks it is the other's duty to watch it).

(Tr. by Zinda Kaul)

And, yet another indicator of this attitude toward Kashmiri is reflected in the preference and search of Kashmiris for external models of comparison for excellence as creative writers. The lingering legacy of earlier Persian cultural domination is evident in such comparisons: the Kashmiri poet Mahmud Garni of Shahbad (d. 1855) was called the Nizami of Kashmir, and Wahab Pare (1846-1914) was favorably called the Firdausi of Kashmir; both were notable poets in Persian. The markers of literary status are thus constructed by comparison with, for example, Persian, Urdu, Sanskrit, and English. There has traditionally been a kind of insecurity in being a Kashmiri writer—insecurity in terms of position and in terms of recognition.

And in functional terms, the Kashmiri language in Kashmir is a prisoner of its own two borders—on the one side the present "line of control" near Uri and on the other side the Banihal Pass. The currency of the Kashmiri language—whatever functional domains the language has acquired—is within that limited territory and ceases at these borders, one artificially created and one a natural boundary. Beyond that, in India and Pakistan, Kashmiris are in diaspora—both real and imagined, forced and voluntary, recent and of past generations. In some Kashmiri homes, on the plains of India and Pakistan, the language is already in a comatose state; in a majority of diasporic families one can see gradual decay and death of the Kashmiri language as shown in Bhatt's study of Kashmiris in Delhi (1989; see also Kak 2001).

I see this happen in my own family, in my children and in the Kashmiri *baradari* we interact with in the Midwest of the United States and in other parts. In India one observes an identical linguistic behavior and language use in younger generations of Kashmiris in Jammu and in the Pamposh Colony, in South Delhi, where several Kashmiri speaking Pandit families relocated after the 1950s. This observation is confirmed in other parts of India too.

We have no reason to believe that in the United States, Britain and other countries outside India the language of diasporic Kashmiris will have a different fate than that of such other diasporic minority languages. I am reminded of the users of transplanted Armenian language in the USA by the "smoldering generation: a generation who have almost lost their language." The Armenian culture revivalists have finally recognized that "the slide of obliteration" of the culture and language cannot be checked.

The Kashmiri language has become the language of yet another diasporic "smoldering generation," in both their native land and beyond the borders of India in other adopted countries. What I have said about the Armenian and Kashmiri languages is the fate of a significant number of other languages—diasporic or non-diasporic—in India, in Asia, and beyond.

This has happened in the past, and this doom is hovering over South Asia's languages now—slowly but visibly a host of languages are passing through various stages of extinction. These "moribund" or "endangered" languages in the region include the following.

Language	Speakers	Year of Census
BANGLADESH		
Mru	18,000	
Phalura	8,000	
Chak	6,000	
Pankua	3,000	
Khyang	2,000	
Kumi	2,000	
INDIA		
Agariya	98	1961
Aimol	108	1961
Anal	11,074	1981
Andamanese	17	1961
Angika	473 or 502	1971
Ao	101 or 302	1981
NEPAL		
Sherpa	140,000	
Danuvar	28,000	
Dhangar	20,000	
Derai	7,000	
Thakali	7,000	
Kumal	1,000	
Byangsi	1,000	
PAKISTAN		
Brahui	1,400	
Khowar	250	
Wanetesi	80,000	
Bashkarik	40,000	
Bateri	30,000	
Kati	5,000	
Dameli	5,000	
Gourarbati	1,000	
Palasi	1,000	

The colonization of America and Australia is responsible for the greatest extinction of indigenous languages, and closer to its home in the British Isles English caused the extinction of Cornish, a Celtic language, that lost its last speaker almost 200 years ago. Manx as a native language became extinct in 1900 on the Isle of Manx. I must, however, add that I do not imply that some pockets of Kashmiri users will not survive, as do some Irish-speakers in parts of Ireland.

The numerical profile, and functionally restricted domains of a particular language tell only a part of the story of the threatened decay or death of India's minority languages. There is yet another initiator of the loss of India's linguistic heritage: It is the post-1947 language initiatives embodied in the Eighth Schedule of India's Constitution.

The underlying assumption of the Eighth Schedule seems to be that of language reductionism and selection so that the pluralistic linguistic profile of India could be reduced to a "manageable" number of national languages. This was one agonizing initiative in response to earlier characterization of the subcontinent as " a Tower of Babel," and a land of linguistic "confusion" and "anarchy." This response resulted in a much-debated and controversial selection of languages—now eighteen—for the designation of national languages.

The critique of India's language management has resulted in an on-going debate that faults these initiatives on a variety of counts (for an overview see, e.g. Gupta, Abbi and Aggarwal 1995). I shall identify the following.

First, *conceptual prescriptivism,* that is, adoption of a language policy model, essentially duplicated from what was then the USSR. It is debatable whether this model was appropriate for a democratic state like India. Second, *hierarchical identification,* that is recognition of a hierarchy of languages that ultimately led to divisive reorganization of India's states. Third, *functional isolation,* that is, non-recognition of the functional range of viable linguistic and literary cultures within a linguistic culture. A çonsequence of this 'isolation' is continuous demand for language rights in a several states in India—both in the South and North. Fourth, *identity suppression,* that is, non-recognition of language as an exponent of cultural identity (e.g., the tribal languages, and a variety of other languages). Finally, *role marginalization,* that is marginalization of the functions of minority languages by the majority language users.

What this digression shows is that in spite of recognition of Kashmiri among the India's eighteen national languages and the patronage the language receives due to this status, the attitude of Kashmiri's toward their language has not changed. In the Jammu and Kashmiri state, Kashmiri does not have the status of the state language. That status is given to Urdu, and thereby hangs yet another linguistic tale.

It is indeed true that in diasporic contexts, by acquiring other languages, English, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali and so on, we Kashmiris certainly become more than we are —linguistically, culturally and functionally. We encounter other traditions and acquire other identities. One might, however, ask: By losing our language, culture, and traditions are the Kashmiris also becoming *less* than we are? We have yet to respond to this question in a constructive, pragmatic, organized and realistic way.

THE RESCUE BRIGADE

The scenario of looming doom confronting the Kashmiri language, particularly in diaspora, is indeed based on the past diasporic destinies of the worlds' many other minority languages. And in reality, the diasporic Kashmiris are not even a "minority" in any significant numerical sense. We are somewhat like the Parsis (who emigrated to India in the 8th century to avoid Muslim persecution) more visible than numerically countable. Therefore one has to consider what type of language input from other languages and interactional contexts the speakers of Kashmiri receive in "melting pot" situations.[10]

In contextualizing the Kashmiri language in our diasporic life and living, we must ask: What functions does Kashmiri serve? What competence in the language do we develop in our younger generation the "melting pot" generation— for using the Kashmiri language as a medium to open doors to what we believe are the canonical texts of Kashmiri culture, legacy, and heritage.

By imparting some minimal knowledge in Kashmiri to our new generation—who generally receive it grudgingly anyway—are we providing them an effective tool to understand any *cultural resources* through the Kashmiri medium? Such literary resources are, for example, the mystic poet Laleshwari, the Bhakti poets Parmananda, Krishna Razdan, Zinda Kaul "Masterji", the pioneers of modernism Ghulam Ahmad Mahju and Abdul Ahad Azad; and the major initiators of the Renaissance in Kashmiri literature Dina Nath Nadim and Abdul Rahman Rahi.

One might also ask whether this transmission of awareness about this literary tradition — oral and written — has now to be done essentially through translations. The question of translations raises a string of other important questions. Perhaps one initial practical initiative is to plan one or two Kashmiri culture centers, where present and, it is to be hoped, future generations can locate resources to study what we believe represents this legacy of Kashmiri culture an what we so fondly call Kashmiriyat. I will not go into those details here. One major center of teh Pandit community is Delhi, both numebrically and in terms of sociopolitical activism. However, within Delhi there is no center which in any serious sense qualifies as a repository of Kashmiri cultural resoruces- historical, social, intellectual, and literary.

We have no organized asscess to valuable papers of Kashmiri Pandits and other thinkers, writers, and artists that reflect their perceptions of Kashmiri social, political, and ideological movements. We have no coordinated archives of the sociocultural history of the past and the present of our community and of the communities that played a vital role in our lives.

The younger generation of Kashmiris should have access to the major studies and debates about Kashmir and Kashmiris as chronicled and represented in the published — and oral — soruces from Srinagar before and after teh 1980s. There resources — if these have not already been destroyed — include, for example, the daily Martand, representing one articulate voice of the Pandits of the Valley; the Hamdard, edited by a provocative — and often controversial — political activist Prem Nath Bazaz; the weekly *Desk* associated with the pioneering social reformer and visionary leader Kashyap Bhandu; the weekly *Vitasta* edited by Amarnath Kak; and the *Jyoti* organ of the Kashmiri Pandit Samaj Sudhar Samiti under the dedicated leadership of Pandit Gopi Krishna, who earned international reputation as a proponent of the *Kuṇḍalini* yoga ("path to higher consciousness"). This list is long and the above examples are just illustrative.

If we agree with the Cassandra-like belief that this wave of doom is resulting in *linguicide, language death, language suicide,* and *language decay* of the world's minority languages and cultures, and if we believe that our mother tongue Kashmiri is already engulfed by this wave, now is the time to pause and ask: What role can the "rescue brigades" of the Kashmiri language and culture play?

It appears that the wave has already engulfed the Kashmiri language so far as the Kashmiri Pandit community is concerned. It is present in the refugee camps which the Indian government and media, in a semantically offensive and demeaning way, have termed camps for "migrants" from Kashmir. The doom is active in the diasporic contexts, permanent and temporary, and it is noticeable in the "melting pot" contexts in the United States, Britain, and in several Asian countries where Kashmiris, both Hindus and Muslims, have relocated in small very small—numbers.

There, however, is certainly some excitement—often muted—about preserving the "beloved language." I see this excitement in the letters I receive requesting copies of the manual *An Introduction to Spoken Kashmiri* (2 vols. 1973), and in initiatives started in Boston, in San Francisco, in Washington DC, in Kolkata, and in Delhi. I see it also in the interest shown in my website for learning spoken Kashmiri. (The credit for creating this website goes to Sunil Fotedar of Houstan, Texas, who proposed it, developed it, and is still refining it with dedication and commitment).

The doom I have discussed above is Hydra-like: It has many faces and the decay of the Kashmiri language is only one face. A more ominous face is that of the extinction of the Kashmiri Pandits as a community. We see indications and a warning of this threat in a survey report recently released by Medical Aid, a nongovernmental organization, auguring that the population of displaced Pandits is not only "declining fast" but also that the community is "sure to face extinction." This survey, submitted to the National Human Rights Commission, was conducted in one of the "migrant" camps in Jammu.[11] (see Wani 2001).

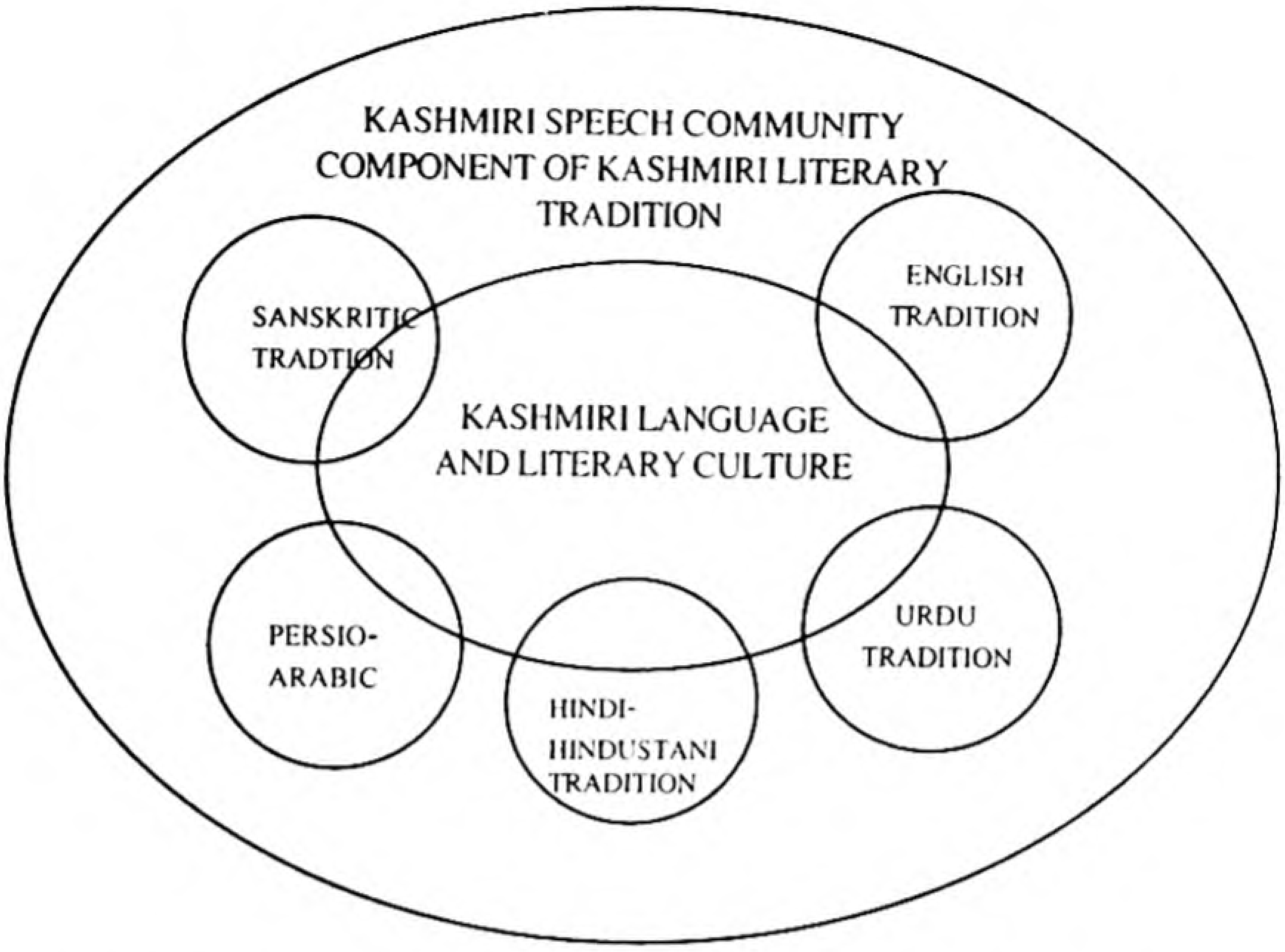
In the past decade over 200,000 Pandits have been forced to leave the Valley due to increasing militancy. The survey further shows that 13,708 "migrant" Pandits have died in the camps, compared to only 4735 births. Dr. Choudary tells us that "if the present death rate continues, the Pandits are sure to face extinction." These indeed are chilling words, and if this doom of the community is not controlled, the next generation of the Pandits may not have to worry any more about saving the Kashmiri language.

We do not have to be reminded that a language does not have a life of its own, nor does a language die or decay through any natural aging process. A language lives because it has users for whom it articulates certain identities or becomes a tool of functional power.

A language dies or decays because its users believe that it has no vital uses for them for preserving their cherished identities. The speakers gradually shift to other languages—languages that provide access to, functionally and attitudinally, greener pastures. In other words, the "melting pot" finally consumes them. That is when obituaries of languages are written. In the case of Kashmiri, and what may be called Kashmiri literary culture—certainly in diaspora—that melting pot hypothesis has already become an observable reality.

CONCLUSION

In the history and evolution of literacy and literary culture in Kashmir, and in the formation of Kashmiri literacy, culture, space and time have determined the linguistic form and functions of the language. One major—and lasting—impact of this interplay of space and time is evident in layers of the hybridization of Kashmiri language and literature. These multiple linguistic identities may be represented as follows.


KASHMIRI SPEECH COMMUNITY
COMPONENT OF KASHMIRI LITERARY TRADITION
SANSKRITIC TRADTION
ENGLISH TRADITION
KASHMIRI LANGUAGE AND LITERARY CULTURE
PERSIO-ARABIC
URDU TRADITION
HINDI-HINDUSTANI TRADITION

In the formation of Kashmiri literary culture, then, each cultural, linguistic and literary strand has added yet another dimension of canonicity and linguistic hybridization: This is also evident in the range of thematic and formal traditions in Kashmiri, for example, the Saivite (or Brahmanical), the Bhakti (devotional) and the Islamic (Sufi) (for references see Kachru 1981: 7-13). It is the composite of these traditions, and their coexistence that ultimately has developed into what is meant by *Kashmiriyat (Kashmiriness)*. What future direction this literary tradition will take only time will tell.

NOTES

1. A version of several sections of this study have appeared earlier in *Vitaṣta* (Kolkota), 2001.

2. For more details of some selected aspects of Kashmiri literary culture and its history in English, see, e.g., Grierson and Barnett 1920; Kaul 1969, Kachru 1981. There are several studies available in Urdu. (e.g. Azad [3 vols], 1959, 1962 and 1963), Hindi (e.g. Toshakhani).

3. For extensive studies of the "Areal characteristics" of the subcontinent see, e.g, Chatterji 1963; Das 1973; D'souza 1966; Emeneau 1956, Gokak 1957, Kachru 1992; Kosambi 1956; Masica 1976; Mukherji 1975; Nagendra 1959; Pandit 1972.

4. See e.g. Emenue 1956: Masica 1976.

5.See D'souza 1992; Ferguson 1992; Masica 1992; Bhatt 1992.

6. See Kachru 1983 and 1992.

7. See Kachru 1981.

8. Mahjur used this expression in a published letter. See, Kaul (1988:168). In this joint letter, written by Mahjur and Gangadhar Bhatt Dehati (journalist and writer), they say that "one of the undersigned writes poetry in a *backward language* like Kashmiri and the other is a writer in Urdu, and both belong to *a neglected country.*" (Emphasis added): no date given. This letter was written in response to an invitation to attend a literary conference outside Kashmir.

9. In an interview in his Jawahir Nagar home in Srinagar.

10. The "melting pot" generation refers to the attempts of minority groups (e.g., ethnic, religious, linguistic) for assimilation with what is called "the main stream," particularly in diasporic contexts. This term was originally used almost a century ago by Israel Zangwill, and it continues to evoke both positive and negative reactions, for example, in the U.S.A.

11. This news item appeared in The newspapertoday.com (Indiatoday News Group) under the caption "The population of Hindus declining dangerously: Survey" by Izhar Wani, dated February, 25, 2001.

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ESSENTIALLY A MINORITY LITERATURE...

Kashmiri literature has developed Janus-like, with two faces.. Sanskritization reflects Indian linguistic and literary traditions, while Persianization shows a deep-rooted influence of essentially West Asian sources. A third process is that of Fusion or Nativization.

Kashmiri literature is essentially a minority literature, with no support either from the Government or the people. There is also the problem of multiplicity of scripts, the Sharada, the Devanagari and the Persio-Arabic.

CHAPTER 14

A HISTORY OF KASHMIRI LITERATURE

Braj B. Kachru

In linguistic terms, Kashmir provides a unique case of language convergence and contacts, since it is surrounded by Shina (a Dardic language) in the north, Tibeto-Burman languages (Balti, Ladakhi) in the east, Pahari and Punjabi dialects in the west, and Dogri and other Pahari dialects in the south. A non-native language has always played an important role as the language of prestige and elitism; Sanskrit and Persian earlier served such a purpose and subsequently Urdu, English and Hindi have done so.

Kashmiri literature has developed in a bicultural context, Janus-like, with two faces. Sanskritization reflects Indian linguistic and literary traditions, while Persianization shows a deep-rooted influence of essentially West Asian sources. A third process is that of Fusion or Nativization.

Kashmiri literature is essentially a minority literature. It had had, till 1947, no patronage either from the Government or from the local Hindu or Muslim communities. There is also the problem of multiplicity of scripts., the Sharada, the Devanagri and the Persio-Arabic.

On the basis of thematic content, there are the Shaiva, Bhakti and Sufi traditions.

The Shaivite tradition is philosophically and ritualistically different from the rest of India, as it is based on Kashmir Shaivism. The Trika philosophy is a type of idealistic monism (Advaita). There are at least five interpretations of the meaning of Trika. First, out of ninety-two agamas, Trika recognizes the following as significant: Siddha, Namaka and Malini. Secondly, Trika is the analysis of three concepts of Shiva, Shakti and Anu. Thirdly, Trika embodies the concepts of Shiva, Shakti and Nara. Fourthly, it is a metaphysical-mystical concept including Para, Apara and Paratpara. Fifthly, knowledge may be classified into three modes: Abheda, Bhedabheda and Bheda. Lalla and Zinda Kaul Masterji typically represent the tradition.

The Bhakti tradition is of two types. First, there are poems about the manifestations and lilas of the ishta deva. Secondly, there is bhakti with reference to a non-personal God. Examples of the former are Parmananda and Prakash Ram. The tone reminds one of pleas and wailing, therefore they have been termed dinakrandana and vinaya. The bhakti poets have mixed Kashmiri with Persian, Arabic and occasionally English.

The Sufi tradition is essentially of Islamic origin, but Kashmiri Sufis are different. They are called rishis (mystics) and follow the Persian literary traditions. Well-known Sufi poets are Sheikh Nur-ud-din, Mahmud Garni and Rasul Mir.

In terms of style, there have been two dominant traditions, that of vatsun and lol.

Vatsun is close to the Kashmiri folk tradition and is, therefore, very popular. In the past, it was transmitted orally from generation to generation. There are occasion-specific vatsun related to various ceremonies such as childbirth, zarikasay, yajnopavita, griha pravesha etc. For a Hindu wedding, there would be specific vatsun for livun, mas mutsravun, yenivol, poshipooza and kanyadaan. The term vanivun is used for singing of vatsun for specific functions of a wedding.

Lol is akin to the geet of Hindi. Habba Khatoon introduced it in the 16th century. It conveys one mood, it expresses a feeling of longing and it emphasizes romantic love. In the hands of Habba Khatoon and Arnimal, lol attained perfection.

THE BEGINNINGS (1300-1500)

The first available text in the Kashmiri language was a treatise on an esoteric sect entitled *Mahanaya Prakasha* by *Shiti Kanth Acharya.* It was deeply influenced by *Apabramsha* and includes a profusion of Sanskrit *tatsam* words.

The most important among the earliest specimens of Kashmiri literature is *Banasura Katha* of *Avtara Bhatta.* It is based on the legendary story of Usha and Aniruddha from *Harivamshapurana.* It is replete with erotic love passages and descriptions of war. Toshkhani's analysis of the text shows only three words of Persian origin.

The first specimens of authentic Kashmiri poetry is provided by a Shaivite woman mystic *Lalleshwari.* She is variously considered to be a Shaivite yogini, under the influence of Sufism and the patron saint of the Rishi order. Lalla is to Kashmiri what Shakespeare is to English.

Lalla is not a poet in the conventional sense. She is more of a seer and indulges at times in play upon words, with exquisite artistry and great sensibility. The number of her *vaak* ranges from 60 to 146, but their impact has been much greater than this number would indicate. She has been viewed as a bhakta, a vedantin, a shaiva yogini and a Sufi. Mahayana Buddhism also influenced her.

Her *vaak* are distinctive because they convey her personal experience. She was an eye-minded mystic. She said: *vuchhum pandith* (I have seen the lord) *vuchhum Shiv ta Shakti meelith* (I have seen Shiva and Shakti united).

Lalla helped develop the Kashmiri language by using it as the vehicle for subtle philosophical content. There are few countries that have so many wise saws and proverbs current as in Kashmir and none of these have greater repute than those attributed to Lal Ded.

Even modern writers like Dina Nath Nadim and Rahman Rahi accept Lalla'a influence both on their form and content.

Sheikh Nur-ud-din is considered the patron saint of Kashmir. He is Nanda Ryosh and Sahazanand. He lived shortly after Lalla and was the founder of the Rishi order.

Two types of compositions are attributed to Nur-ud-din: *shruk* and *bathbandi. Shruk* is didactic in content and exhortative in tone, in most of which he speaks of the transitoriness of life and its pleasures. There is as yet no authentic text of Rishinama or Nurnama.

The *shruk* is modeled after the quantitative metre *bahaar* of Persian. *Vaak,* on the other hand, are free and loose and have stress accents. Rahi feels that *shruk* do not penetrate and stir the heart. They do not communicate the experience as much as the moral lesson to be derived from it.

Nur-ud-din and his order had great impact on Kashmir. He is perhaps the only saint in whose honour a coin has ever been struck. When he died, King Zain-al-Abidin was the chief mourner.

Among other poets of this period we might mention *Sahab Kaul and Mirza Akmal-al-dinbeg Khan Badakshi.*

EARLY MIDDLE PERIOD (1500-1700)

During the reign of Sultan Zain-al-Abidin, Persian attained the status of a court language. Kashmiri thus lost in importance and Persian replaced Sanskrit as the language of literature. This development created a schism in Kashmiri Pandit society, dividing it into the *karkuns* and the *bachabats.*

Even then there were some prominent poets in Kashmiri like Habba Khatoon, Khwaja Habibullah Naushahri, Rupa Bhavani, Prakash Ram and Arnimal.

Habba Khatoon developed the *lol* lyric to its perfection and used the native diction with exquisite selection for its musical effect. Lyrics came to her naturally from early childhood. Her second husband, Sultan Yusuf Shah fell prey to political intrigue and was deposed and imprisoned in Bihar. The separation and humiliation was unbearable for Habba Khatoon. She sang poignant lyrics describing her pangs of separation and loneliness. Her plaintive *lols* have an unusual spontaneity and extreme simplicity of diction.

Khwaja Habibullah Naushahri continued the *vaak* tradition of Lalla. Naushahri's *vaak* have longer lines and a refrain has been added. The diction is very simple, primarily native Kashmiri, but in his imagery there is a clear influence of traditional Persian poetry.

The Pandits have given *Rupa Bhavani* the status of a goddess. Her sayings are in the *vaak* form, although they are much more sanskritized than Lalla-vaak and les effective in their imagery and diction. Her *vaak* reveal the influence of Kashmir Shaivism and Islamic Sufism. Non-attachment and dissolution of the ego are, according to her, the essentials of realization.

Her *vaak* are difficult to understand, because they present esoteric mystical experience and their language is extremely obscure. In some *vaak,* the diction is completely sanskritized. They lack poetic quality, compactness and a skillfully chosen native vocabulary. She has, therefore, become a part of the Kashmiri Pandit tradition, not that of the general Kashmiri literary tradition.

There is no doubt that Lalleshwari and Rupa Bhavani are the two most important women mystics of Kashmiri literature.

Arnimal was the unhappy wife of a distinguished Persian scholar, who deserted her. She nursed her hurt feelings and shattered ego by taking to the spinning wheel. She sang lyrics of love, of separation, of frustration and mild complaint. She forged an exquisite combination of sound and sense, made appropriate choice of words and effective use of alliteration.

Her plaintive tone does not result in malice, revenge or impatience. She sings of her hurt feelings, of callousness, of infidelity and above all the indifference of her love. And yet there is some hope.

Her *lols* possess fresh imagery and an effective phonaesthetic quality. At the same time, the *lols* preserve a basic simplicity. Thus Arnimal gave the *lol* pathos and a plaintive tone, while diminishing the sensuousness and passion given to it by Habba Khatoon.

THE MIDDLE PERIOD (1750-1900)

The middle period was productive in terms of two types of poetry, *Sufi* and *bhakti.*

The Sufis essentially follow the Persian *masnavi* tradition. Their poems are generally allegorical. The attempt is to underplay the ritualistic aspect of religion. The emphasis is on the oneness of God and his manifestation in everything, animate or inanimate. Ardent Muslims hesitate to regard the Sufis as true Muslims.

In Kashmiri, *Mahmud Gami* initiated the tradition of *masnavi.* Nine *masnavis* are attributed to him: *Laila Majnu, Yusuf Zuleikha, Shirin Khusrau, Harun Rashid, Mahmud Ghaznavi, Sheikh Sanan, Sheikh Mansor, Pahalnama* and *Yakhayat.* He also wrote over a hundred poems and *ghazals.* Some of these are exquisite pieces of musicality and tender emotion.

Waliullah Mattu chose the native story of Himal and presented it in Kashmiri.

Rasul Mir wrote sixty-seven poems, but he has already become an integral part of the Kashmiri oral tradition. His diction is close to common speech. There is also good craftsmanship in his choice of sound and sense, as in the composition with the refrain *rinda poshmaal gidne drayi lo lo.*

Maqbul Shah Kralwari has written *Gulrez,* an important work in the *masnavi* tradition. His other *masnavis* are *Baharnama, Pirnama, Mansurnama, Qissa-i-Hazrat-i-Shabir* and *Grisnama.*

This tradition was followed by several other poets like *Swachhi Kral, Rahman Dar, Shams Faqir* and so on.

The bhakti poets followed the Rama and Krishna canon of Hindu mythology, in this tradition, three poets deserve special mention: Parmananada, Lachhman Raina Bulbul and Prakash Ram.

Parmananda surpassed all his known predecessors in the technique of metre and rhyme, and all except Lalla in mysticism. He was deeply devotional and highly philosophical.

In *Lachhman Raina,* Parmananda left a notable disciple. His main compositions are: *Samnama,* a razmiya masnavi, *Nala Damayanti* and *Omnama.* He also composed a large number of bhajans. He is not anything as profound as Parmananda, but he is much clearer, being less mystic and less archaic. He looked forward to modern Kashmiri for words and expressions.

The most important contribution of *Prakash Ram* is his *Ramavtaracharit,* an epic based on Valmiki Ramayana. The language is less sanskritized. Frequently the village variety of Kashmiri has been chosen. There is a combination of narrative and the *lila* form. His other published work is *Luvkushacharita.* Three unpublished works have also been attributed to him: *Krishna Avatara, Akanandun* and *Shivalagna.*

Krishna Razdan is thematically the most impressive writer in the *lila* form and is essentially a *bhakti* poet. In his *Shiva Parinaya,* he introduces Kashmiri realism, both in language and the narrative. He has an intuition for appropriate diction and the choice of apt figures of speech. Another composition by him is *Shivalagna.*

THE MODERN PERIOD (1900-1947)

During the early twentieth century, three types of poetry were written. The first continued the earlier mystical tradition. The second brought out the distinctiveness of the Kashmiri identity. The third introduced innovativeness in stylistic terms and new ideas, both social and political.

The poet who played the most important role in the revival of Kashmiri language and culture was *Ghulam Ahmad Mahjur.* He first composed poetry in Persian and Urdu and then switched over to Kashmiri. He was the first to make Kashmiri poetry both respectable and popular; he was also the first modern poet to attract the attention of writers from other parts of India. He introduced a new technique and diction in Kashmiri and he extended the thematic and stylistic range of Kashmiri poetry.

Mahjur used three major styles in his poems. Sometimes, the Persianized style is dominant, as in *Valo Ho Bagivano.* But although the imagery is that of the traditional *gul-o-bulbul,* he used typically Kashmiri collocations also. In the concluding line he uses phoneaesthetics effectively:

Bunyul kar, vaav kar, gagray kar, toofan paida kar.

The second was the neutral style *of Baagi Nishati ke Gulo.* But the style that brought out fully the lyrical talent of Mahjur and made him the poet of the Kashmiri masses was the folk style.

Mahjur was the first poet to be noticed by Tagore, Devendra Satyarthi and Balraj Sahni. It was slowly realized by all that Mahjur's poetry was not just lo lo, but was being taken seriously by poets of Tagore's stature.

Mehjur is definitely one of the architects of literary modernism in Kashmiri.He recreated the myths and legends of his native land. He secularized poetry by providing subtle nationalism and patriotism, blended with enticing romanticism.

Zinda Kaul Masterji was a poet in many ways different from Mehjur.He composed his earlier poems in Urdu and Persian. These expressed dejection, frustration and occasionally hilarity. His poem Aha Ha Klerki was a satire on government service. From 1920 to 1935, he composed Urdu patriotic songs and satires on man and society. He also wrote a few poems in English and Hindi, but these are best forgotten.

In 1939, he retired from government service and started writing in Kashmiri.In 1944, the poem *Sumran* (The Rosary) was published and it earned Masterji a permanent position as an important Kashmiri poet. It is a very complex poem, attaining a sort of Hegelian idealism. In 1951, he published a collection of thirteen poems under the title Sumran. His total output is not more than fifty poems or so.

In the 1940s, when everything was out of joint in Kashmir, Masterji's poetry was considered, perhaps harshly, as the poetry of the *thokur-kuth.*

It is difficult to judge what Masterji's philosophy was, but in one of his letters he has revealed that he had firm faith in God as the highest ideal of Truth, Goodness and Beauty.

Masterji did not create any literary disciples. He was treated by a small group of Kashmiri Pandits as a spiritual guru. The philosopher Naravane compared him with the Amarnath Cave, " One representing physical altitude and the other representing spiritual elevation, and both conveying a profound sense of sublimity."

Abdul Ahad Azad blazed a trail of revolution and social change in Kashmiri poetry. He died very young, at the age of 45, but he left a distinct mark on Kashmiri literature. He expanded its thematic range considerably.

He had three phases in his poetic career. The first includes love lyrics and devotional poems written under the pen name Ahad (unique). In the second, he wrote nature poetry under the name Janbaaz. In 1931, he decided to adopt the pen name Azad. Partly due to the sudden death of his little son, he became a skeptic and a rationalist and was well on the road to agnosticism. He turned a rebel and the standard bearer of social revolution. Orthodox Muslims considered his *Shikwa-I-Iblis* a blasphemy. He courageously preached scientific humanism.

Azad was not only a poet. He also compiled the first history of the Kashmiri Language — *Kashmiri Zaban aur Shayiri.*

Mir Ghulam Hasan Beg Arif was closely associated with the journals *Gulrez* and *Kongposh.* He used powerful diction for irony and sarcasm, in respect of politicians, in his *rubaiyat* He also wrote a *masnavi* entitled *Laila* and the first travelogue in Kashmiri.

Ahad Zargar continued the earlier mystical tradition of Shams Faqir and Samad Mir. He blended the Shaiva and Sufi doctrines and wrote a *masnavi* titled *Akanandun.* He showed his talent mainly in *ghazals* and *nats.*

Mir Ghulam Rasul Nazki started as an Urdu poet but shifted to Kashmiri later. In *Namrudnama,* a collection of two hundred quartrains, he praised the Lord and expressed his attachment to *din.* But Nazki never became part of the literary movement of his times.

Dina Nath Wali Almast composed lyrics on nature and social reform. His collections are *Bala Yapari* and *Sahrayuk Posh.*

Ghulam Ahmad Fazil is essentially a lyricist. Some of his poems can be sung well, e.g. *Krali Koor, Pahal Koor, Zooni Mam Dal, Bram Dith Saqi, Chena Ros Pyaala Gom Khaali* and *Gulmarg.*

THE RENAISSANCE (1947-)

The establishment of Radio Kashmir in July 1948 provided a daily forum for the use and development of Kashmiri language. A Cultural Front was also organized in October 1947 and this also provided a thrust towards experimentation. The radio revived interest in indigenous forms of music and song, poetry and prose, and also created the functional prose and modern art forms like the radio play, the short story, the skit and the light essay.

This may be called the beginning of the Nadim era, as it is dominated by *Dina Nath Nadim,* the most innovative and sensitive writer in Kashmiri.

The total number of his poems is about one hundred and fifty. There is no published collection of his work. He first wrote in English and Urdu and shifted to Kashmiri in 1942 with *Maj Kashir.* Then followed *Sonth, Areevali Praarakhna* and *Graav,* poems of patriotism, revolution and freedom.

1947 marked his next phase. He wrote *Tsi Mir-I-karvaan Ban. Naaraye Inqilaab, Mye chhu Hyond ta Mussalman Byeyi Insaan Banavun, Sherwaani Sund Khwaab,* and *Prichhun chhum.* All these were suggestive of the turmoil of the period and were used to awaken the youth.

In 1950, Nadim introduced blank verse with *Ba Gyev Na Az.* Other poets followed his style. He firmly established the process of Kashmirization of the language. He chose native collocations and embedded them in new contexts.

One more stylistic innovation, in the form of the dramatic monologue, came in *Trivanzaah.* Another poem *Dal Hanzni Hund Vatsun* viewed a vegetable vendor with pathos and realism.

In 1953, Nadim wrote the first opera *Bombur ti Yemberzal,* depicting the ultimate triumph of good over evil. The opera was an instant success.

Nadim also experimented with sonnets, *vaakh* and *zitni* (something like *haiku).* His secret seems to lie in his intuition for an effortless use of a highly appropriate vocabulary, a keen ear for sound and rhythm and an artist's instinct for combining all this in fresh imagery.

Mohammad Amin Kamil wanted to have a totally new style of writing. He first wrote in Urdu from 1932 to 1952. With *Shayir*

Marihaa Zaanh, he started writing in Kashmiri. His two collections of Kashmiri poetry are *Masmalar* and *Lavi ta Pravi*. He used new symbols and metaphors and blended Hindu mythology in his poems.

Kamil has excelled in *ghazal*. He introduced a realism and modern sensibility to it and infused it with the spirit of modern times.

Abdul Rahman Rahi wrote first in Urdu from 1942 to 1951. In the fifties he shifted to Kashmiri.*Samivin Saaz* is his first collection of poems, mainly *ghazals*. Other collections are *Yim Saany Aalav*, *Kalaam-e-Rahi* and *Navroz-e-Sabaa*. Since 1960 he has been writing mainly symbolic poems in the existential mode, as in *Sadak*, *Baas*, *Takhliq* and *Akh Subhi*. He is influenced by the mystic poetry of Lalla and Shams Faqir, modern Persian writers and Western writers like Hopkins and Eliot. His style is now intellectualized, the symbols are from Greek, Islamic and Indian mythology and the language is terse and epigrammatic.

A period of disillusionment has followed the Progressive movement. We see examples of this in *Mohammad Roshan* and *Ghulam Nabi Firaq*. Roshan collaborated with Nadim in *Himaal ti Naagraayi*. Now he is disillusioned as in *Shaheedi Sanz Maej*. He has experimented with *tukh*, which is somewhat like *rubai*.

Firaq has written exquisite nature poems and also translated Tennyson, Keats and Eliot into Kashmiri.

Vasudev Reh conveys his experiences and mild warnings as in Shab Gard and Yeth Chhu Sehlaab Yivavun. He conveys unalloyed truth in unadorned style.

Ghulam Rasul Santosh first wrote in Urdu and then shifted to Kashmiri. He has written sonnets, *ghazals* and blank verse. He uses language like a painter, economically and effectively, as in *Raath*, *Treshnaa*, and *Vyes Myaani Noorie*. He has come to the native philosophical doctrine of Kashmiri Shaivism. His *Bahr-I-tavil* is an original experiment, where he follows the Persian tradition of composing a long poem with structural flexibility.

There is a new generation of poets like *Makhan Lal Mahar*, *Muzaffar Azim*, *Mohan Nirash*, *Ghulam Nabi Khayal*, *Moti Lal*

Saqi, Moti Lal Naaz, Chaman Lal Chaman, Makhan Lal Bekas, Ghulam Ahmed Gash, Ghulam Ahmed Aajir, and Rafiq Ahmed Raaz.There are numerous trends and no dominant influence. It is difficult to say what is representative of contemporary Kashmiri poetry, other than individualism, introspection and drawing inspiration from non-traditional sources.

DEVELOPMENTS IN PROSE

In 1941, Zinda Kaul observed that there was no Kashmiri prose to speak of. Functional prose had been written for centuries either in Sanskrit or in Persian. Even after 1947, the State opted for Urdu as the state language.

The *luki-kathi* (folk tales) included typical Indian stories such as the *Tale of a Parrot* and *the story of Raja Vikramaditya,* or tales of Persian origin focusing on Yusuf and Zulaikha or Mahmud Ghazni.

Other early prose texts were translations of the Old and the New Testaments, *Wade's Grammar of Kashmiri, Ishwar Kaul's* book on Kashmiri grammar called *Kashmir Shabdamrita, Mahadev Gigoo's* book on *Euclid's geometry* and *Tafsir-e-Koran* by *Maulvi Yahaya.*

Shrikanth Toshkhani adopted the Devnagri script to Kashmiri and also made textbooks for the Women's Welfare Trust.

DRAMA

The roots of Kashmiri drama may be traced to the folk dance called *Bandi Paethar* and to a lesser degree to *roph* and *damal.* Bandi Paethar is a native form of entertainment that provides comic element and humour, entertaining bodily movements, irony, dialect mixing, dance and mimicry. The *sornay* (shehnai) is an integral part of the performance that ends with *dua-e-khair* (benediction). Audience participation is encouraged.

The first literary dramas were based on Indian mythology. *Nand Lal Kaul* wrote plays such as *Satich Kahvit,* which were played at Raghunath Mandir. Nila *Kanth Sharma* wrote *Bilwa Mangal* and *Swapanvasavdatta. Tara Chand Bismil* wrote *Satich*

Vath, based on the Harish Chander legend. *Ghulam Nabi Dilsoz* wrote *Shirin-Khusro* and *Laila -Majnu.*

Mohi-ud-din Hijri wrote the first non-mythological native plot for *Greesi Sund Gari,* which was an attempt at social realism.

IPTA gave a new direction to play writing, when Balraj Sahni set up a Centre at Srinagar. *Prem Nath Pardesi* wrote *Batihar,* a play of social revolution; the manuscript was confiseated by the Governor. His play *Shahid Sherwani* was staged but without much success.

The Sudhar Samiti Drama Club focused on the social evils of the Pandit community such as the position of the daughter-in-law, widow remarriage and the dowry system. Some of the plays were *Krishna Janma, Satyavan Savitri* and *Vidhva.*

After 1947, the Cultural Front took theatre to rural Kashmir and showed plays such as *Zamin Greesi Sinz, Tsuri Bazaar,* Tre Bata Chor and *Dollar Saeb.* The people saw their own daily lives enacted on the stage.

Dina Nath Nadim presented the first opera *Bombur Yemberzal* in 1953.It was received with great acclaim. It had some influence of the classical Chinese opera. Nadim's other operas were *Neeki Badi, Heemaal ta Nagraay, Shihili Kulya* and *Vitasta.* The last is an exquisite musical based on the myths and legends of Kashmir; it presents the love of a Naga princess and a Pishacha prince.

Prem Nath Dhar presented the overworked theme of Hindu-Muslim unity in *Zi Gobar. Mohammad Amin Kamil* wrote *Bombur ti Lobur,* and *Ghulam Rasul Santosh* wrote *Gulrez.*

The government-sponsored Jashn-e-Kashmir provided a forum for staging plays. The J&K Academy of Art and Culture subsidized and initiated activities related to drama. The Tagore Hall became a favourite venue. The local radio and TV networks also gave a fillip to creative dramatists.

The following writers have contributed to the widening of the thematic range of Kashmiri drama: *Ali Mohammad Lone, Viz Chhi Sanya; Som Nath Zutshi, Vethi Hind Bathi Zi* and *Nov*

Makaan; Pushkar Brian. Tan Tadaak and *Machami; Akhtar Mohi-ud-din, Nasti Hund Sawaal* and *Sheeshi ta Sangistan; Radha Krishen Bram. Yahoo; Moti Lal Kemmu, Trinov* and *Lal Ba Draayas Loli Re.*

Radio plays have been developed by *Ghulam Hussain Beg Arif, Pushkar Bhan, Pran Kishore, Ali Mohammad Lone, Bansi Lal Nirdosh, Nur Mohammad Roshan, Somnath Sadhu. Sajood Sailani and Shafi Sifai.*

SHORT STORY

The history of the short story is only fifty years old. Members of the Progressive Writers' Association wrote the first stories. *Som Nath Zutshi* wrote the first story *Yeli Phol Gaash* in February 1950. It depicted the contrast between the lives of a labourer and his employer.

Nadim, Kamil and Rahi were attracted to this new genre but only Kamil persisted and succeeded. His *Kathi Manz Kath* is true to its title. The ten stories in this collection reveal the author's penetrating eye for complicated human emotions and his ability to portray them with skill and realism. The titles are *Kokar Jang, Jaanhnami, Nov Taavan, Potkal, Āaṇi and Aabshaar ti Kanipal.*

It is *Akhtar Mohi-ud-din* who provided a thematic freshness, sensibility and stylistic newness to the short story. In 1955, he published his first collection *Sath Sangar.* These are stories of atmosphere, the mind's inner working, memorable situations and character, also suspense and dramatic effect. His second collection *Sonzal* was not in line with the expected paradigm of progressive writing and therefore became controversial.

There are a dozen writers of short stories, who include *Ali Mohammad Lone, Sufi Ghulam Mohamad, Ghulam Nabi Baba, Bansi Lal Nirdosh, Deepak Kaul, Umesh Kaul, Ratan Lal Shant, Hari Kishen Kaul and Faruq Masudi.*

The Kashmiri short story remains in its infancy, restricted by various linguistic, social and situational constraints.

NOVEL

In 1957 the first novel *Dod Dag* was published. In this short novel, *Akhtar Mohi-ud-din* presents the story of two orphan sisters Fata and Raja, their marriages and divorces and a variety of complex situations. His novelette *Zuv ta Zolani* has been considered somewhat unreal.

Mohammad Amin Kamil took up the theme of communal harmony in *Gati Manz Gaash,* chronicling the attack on Baramulla in October 1994.

Asi Ti Chhi Insaan by *Ali Mohammad Lone* depicts a pilgrimage to Amarnath, and is an allegory depicting the journey of life.

Ghulam Nabi Gauhar's Mujrim is a complex novel with excessive sentimentality. His second novel *Myul* has appeared recently.

It is difficult to say whether the novel in Kashmiri will develop as an art form. There are serious constraints of limited readership and inadequate publication facilities.

CURRENT TRENDS

The poetic scenario shows two tendencies, neutralization and intellectualization. Neutralization refers particularly to de-Persianization and de-Sanskritization. The influence of English poets appears to be more dominant. Poets are looking back to the earlier literary tradition of Lalla, Habba Khatoon and Rasul Mir, or to the philosophical traditions of Kashmir Shaivism and Sufism. The *vaakh* has reappeared.

Kashmiri poetry can today boast of a number of modern poets. The prose is still young and shows the beginnings of a new literary genre.

IT IS AN OFT-REPEATED THEME...

Most Indian writers across the ages have written about Kashmir in eulogistic terms, calling it the crown of Mother India and the seat of Sarada Devi, the goddess of learning.

Kashmir figures in a big way in modern Hindi literature in all its genres. Kashmiri authors have also carved a notable niche for themselves.

CHAPTER 15

KASHMIR IN HINDI LITERATURE

Chandrakanta

INTRODUCTION TO AUTHOR

Chandrakanta was born in Srinagar, Kashmir and is M.A. B.Ed.

She is an eminent writer of Hindi fiction. She started writing in 1967. Her famous novels include Katha Satisar, Apne Apne Konark, Ailaan Gali Zinda Hai, Antim Saksh, Yahan Vitasta Behti Hai *and* Baqi Sab Khairiat Hai. *Her notable collections of short stories include* Suraj Ugne Tak, Kali Barf, O Son Kiseri, Katha Nagar, Charchit Kahaniyan *and* Badalte Haalaat Mein. *She has also published a collection of poems titled Yahin Kahin Aas Paas.*

Chandrakanta has received many honours and awards, including those from the J&K Cultural Academy, Haryana Sahitya Academy and the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

She has travelled quite extensively, both in India and abroad, and has taken part in numerous conferences, seminars and workshops and given public readings of her stories and poems.

Currently, she is a freelance author and writer.

Kashmir has been a centre of attraction for saints, philosophers, literatures, beauty seekers and people of different interests from centuries. It is not only because of the scenic beauty of its snow caped mountain ranges, myriad lakes, changing hues of majestic chinars and crystal clear springs, but also because of its rich cultural heritage and contribution to philosophy, religion, literature, art and craft.

Kashmir was called Shardapeeth as it has been a seat of high learning. No wonder, Kashmir has produced great Sanskrit scholars and Shaivacharias like Abhinavgupta, Kshemendra, Somananda, Kalhan, Bilhan, mammut and others. Kashmiri culture is the amalgamation of the influences of Buddhism, Shaivism and Islam, as these religions flourished here from time to time and Kashmiris blended them in their own culture. This also is one of the reasons why people of various faiths visited Kashmir and took interest in it. These visitor-scholars wrote travelogues and memoirs about their experiences and documented their impressions. Chinese pilgrim Hient-sang, who visited Kashmir in 625 A.D. wrote about Buddhist Viharas and Stupas; discourses by Arhats (Bodhisatvas) and councils, which were held there especially at the time of king Kanishka, when the Buddhist Scriptures were engraved on red copper.

Dr. Tokan. D. Sumi, Professor of linguistic, Aichikyoiku University of Japan writes,Kashmir is of great cultural interest to us, because it was here that Mahayana boomed and travelled from this very land to China, Korea and then to Japan. It was through the efforts of the great Kashmir scholar Kumarajiva, that Buddhist culture was introduced to central Asia......... Kashmir Scholar Gunaverman gave a new cultural life to Tibet."

Shaiva philosophers thrived in Kashmir. They gave a new interpretation to Shaivism by introducing Spanda and Pratibhijna darshan. Trika Shastra is the contribution of Kashmiri scholars to Shaiva philosophy.

According to Sir Arther Rider, stories of Panchatantra were written by a Kashmiri Pandit Vishnu Sharma. Gunadya Pandit wrote a huge volume of short stories named Vrihatkatha, and Somdeva Katha Saritsagar in Kashmir Aurel Stein, Bernier, George Grierson, Tomas Row and other foreign as well as Indian intellectuals have praised Kashmir for its rich cultural heritage and its unparallel natural beauty.

For Hindi writers, Kashmir has been of great interest for different reasons. Some have been attracted towards its ancient origin, geographical phenomena and checkered history, which is based on myths, Puranas as well as archeological findings, some are impressed by its philosophical and literary contributions and others by its unparallel beauty of nature.

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND LINKS WITH INDIA

Kalhan in his book Rajtarangini, starts the history of Kashmir with the coronation of Yashowati by Krishna, as the queen of Kashmir. Ashoka integrated Kashmir with his empire and founded the city Srinagar. Shaivism and Mahayana had great influence on India and rest of the world. This has been shown by different writers in Hindi literature.

Most of the Hindi writers have seen Kashmir and its culture as part of Indian cultural ethos. Veteran Hindi writer and critic Dr Ramvilas Sharma giving examples, states that Kashmir's relationship with India is the relationship of mind and soul. This has found expression in poetry, literature and philosophy. Vincent. A. Smith also proves his point by giving the example of grand ruins of Martand and Avantipur, which, he says, are the symbols of Indian faith and culture. Revolutionary poet Subramaniam Bharti called Kashmir, the crown of mother India. People of South bow in the direction of north even today, to pay homage to goddess of learning Sharda Devi saying "Nameste Sharda Devi Kashmir Pur Vasini."

Dr Ramvilas Sharma in his article, "Kashmir ka vedic kaleen Swaroop," not only reveals the close ties of Kashmir with rest of India, but logically reviews the origin and source of Kashmiri language, showing its links with Vedic times.

Some linguists think that Kashmiri language has originated from Dardi group of languages, others say, it has come from Sheena and Khober group, but Dr Sharma believes that, with all the acquired influences from Persian, Arabic and other languages from time to time, Kashmiri has originated from Sanskrit group of languages only.

He proves his point by delving into the ancient history of Kashmir, when Aryans come from 'Saptasindhu' Pradesh and settled in peaceful surroundings of the valley. They did influence the Aborigines, Nagas, Yakshas and other tribes living there. Many Aryan rituals and customs like performing Yajnya, have been inherited by Kashmiris and have I been part of their rituals. He concludes that Kashmiris are the progeny of the sages who settled in the valley for penance. Dr. Sharma speaks very high of Sanskrit scholars of Kashmir, whose contribution to Sanskrit literature is monumental. Right from the 5th century to 15th century A.D. Bhamah, Udbhatt, Mummut and other Sanskrit Acharyas opened new vistas and added a lot to Indian poetry and Grammar. Bharat's Natya Shastra, Udbhatt's Alankar Shashtra/Kuntak's Vakrokti, Kshemendra's Auchitya in Rasa and Anandvardhan's Dhvaniyalok added new dimensions to Indian poetry and literature. Considering Somdeva's Katha Saritsagar, a great gift to world, Dr. Sharma appreciates the farsightedness and vision of Kashmiri writers, who not only considered the need of their time, but also looked into the future. He does not draw his conclusions from Neelmatpuran and Rajtarangini only' but from the existing customs, folklores and geographical factors also. Dr Shashi Shekhar Toshkhani in his book, "Kashmiri Sahitya Ka Itihas" also proves Dr Sharma's conclusion of Kashmiri literature having links with Indian poetic tradition. He explains this by giving example of Banasurkatha written in the time of Sultan Zain - Ul - Abdin, which shows the trend of transcreating old epics and tales. This has been a prominent feature of medieval period of Indian literature. Autar Bhatt's Banasurkatha's form resembles that of Sanskrit and Prakrit - Apabhransha epics, and style and rhyme is taken from Sanskrit, though, there is some originality of form and content. Dr Toshkhani, analysing the earlier form of Kashmiri language finds that besides writing in Sanskrit, Kalhan and Kshemendra have written in local language also, which was called "Sarvagochar Bhahsa." Toshkhani confirms that hiostory of literature starts from the eleventh century. It's original from is found in the analysis of Sadhana Sutras of "Chumma - Sampradaya' Shitikanth wrote 'Mahanaya Prakash' based on tantra philosophy in thirteenth century. Bhakti literature was the base of Kashmiri literature, Toshkhani says, which reached its Zenith in Lalleswari's Vakh' and Nunda - Rishi's 'Shrukh'. There have been different opinions about the earlier script also. Famous linguist William Jackson llmadi and Dr Leetner say that Kashmiri was written in

Devnagri script in earlier times. Toshkhani does not believe in dividing the History of literature in clear cut periods of times. He analyses the changing trends and reviews the history of Kashmiri literature in two broad categories, as he believes that we cannot draw a dividing line between the changing trends of literature. He finds the origin of Habba Khatoon's lyrical poetry in BanasurKatha and Sukh Dukh charit of fifteenth century. His critical survey of sufi kavya of Noor - Udin Wali, Samad Mir, Vahabkhar, Leela kavya of Krishna Joo Razdan, Masnavi poetry, Mahjoor's poetry and the contemporary literature is based on the facts available. Depicting the changes in the form and content of poetry, prose and drama written in Kashmiri literature, he gives us an important book, written with coherence, objectivity and insight. Prof. P.N. Pushp and Shibban Krishan Raina also have written books on the history of Kashmiri language and literature in Hindi. Apart from different dates of division in periods and some controversies over the origin of Kashmiri language, we do not find anything new or more significant in those books.

On Sanskrit literature of Kashmir

We find many research papers and books written on Sanskrit literature of Kashmir. Mrs Shakuntala Mallick has edited a book, Sanskrit Sahitya Ko Kashmir Ka Yogdan'(contribution of Kashmir towards Sanskrit literature) Mrs Mallick calls Kashmir the crown and brain of India. Appreciating the contribution of Kashmiri Pandits to Indian philosophy and literature, she states that after vedic period Kashmir and Kerala have been the centre of Sanskrit literature. Kashmir has been the land of saints and sages like Mareech, Dakshayani and Shakalya. Dr Prabhudayal Agnihotri, writing about ancient Kashmir in this book .throws light on the Sharda temple of Gush gram, giving the references of Rajashekhar's Kavya Memansa. Dr.Agnihotri says that Sharda Temple was the oldest centre of education where philosophy, art, literature and religion flourished. Sidhamatra Vernamala was in vogue in Kashmir. Alberuni also has mentioned about Sidhamtra Vernamala. This was used from Kashmir to Kannouj. When children started learning, the first word taught to them was "Om Namah Siddham." Dr Agnihotri gives details about Sanskrit scholars of Kashmir. Evaluating Kalhan Pandit's Book of chronicles, Rajtarangini, the first ever written history book in Sanskrit, he throws light on grammar books,Kavya

Shastra and Trik philosophy. He laments that today when the valley is under the grip of militancy, children of Abhinavgupta and Kshemendra are living as refugees in their own country. His thouhtfully written essay analyses the changing times and ponders upon deterioration of moral and ethical values of today's Kashmir. Dr. Jaikishan Prasad Khandelwal, in his research based article," ltihas Avam Bhoogol mein Kashmir Charcha" reviews ancient history and geographical factors of Kashmir. He gives a detailed description of Satisar, its transformation into land; writes about Demon Jalodbhava, Nagas,Kashyap Rishi and old history of the valley. He explains the importance of Tirthas, tells the stories about Brahma Shikar and VISHNU Shikhar, Kausar Nag, Mahapadmasar and other places. His description of earlier settlers of Kashmir, religious mindedness and simplicity of people, rituals and social system etc is based on Neelmat Puran and Rajtarangini. Shri Gopal Nevatia in his paper on Kashmir, finds reference of Kashmir in VISHNUPURAN, where it is called Kartaswarakar (Gold Mine). He calls Kashmir Adibhumi. Giving scientific reason for drying up of the huge lake, he writes how the land came into existence and how Aryans came and settled in the valley. Dr Nevatia finds references in old religious books and Purans that Shakuntala lived with her son Sarvadaman in Atri Muni's Ashram, which existed somewhere in the hills of Kashmir and Dushiyantatns Rath came down in this Himalayan region. Myths and folktales may not be having scientific base or historical evidences, we cannot refute them as, in course of time, they become a part of people's beliefs and faiths and unknowingly merge with the culture of a society. Nivetia also believes that Kalidas was a Kashmiri,otherwise it would not have been possible for him to describe Himalayas so intensely and vividly as he has done in Meghdoot and Kumarasambhava. Shri Laxmidhar and Dr. Ramvilas Sharma also do not refute such probabilities. In Jaishankar Prasad's play, Skandhagupta, the poet Matrigupta (Kalidas) belongs to Kashmir, who ruled Kashmir, in 430 A.D. His memories of Kashmir prove his association with the valley. The well known poet Jankivallabh Shastri has written a novel, Kalidas. In this novel he almost confirms that Kalidas was from Kashmir. He went to Patliputra to pay homage to Jyotilingas and then proceeded to Ujjain where he met Vidyotama. Vidyotama discussed philosophy with Kalidas and fell in love with him which resulted in their marriage.

On Kashmir Shaivism

We find quite a number of books, research papers and articles written about Kashmir Shaiva philosophy, Sanskrit literature of Kashmiri scholars and other aspects of Kashmir. Kashmir no doubt has been of keen interest to Hindi world, especially the ancient phase of it. The eminent Hindi poet, drama and prose writer, Jaishankar Prasad has mentioned Kashmir in many of his works. In his kavya book Kamayani, which touches the heights of an epic, he has weaved Kashmir Shaivism in the story of Manu, Shraddha and Ida. Kashmir Shaivism which consists of Trika and Shakta, believes that Param Tatva is Shiva. He is Prakash and Shakti is Vimarsha. Universe is the union of Shiva and Shakti. In Kamayani, Manu is Adi Purush and Shradha is his shakti which leads him to creation. In Neelmat Puran when everything has been devastated and there is water everywhere, a boat is tied with a peak of Himalaya, to start the creation afresh. Prasad has shown more or less similar situations in Kamayani. After Pralaya when water starts receding and there is hope of sunrise, Manu reaches a place in Uttargiri Himvan Pradesh. He finds a boat there which has been thrown near the hill by a matsya. Manu meets shraddha here and tries to start life again. According to Shaiva Darshan, the universe is Shivamy, embodiment of Shiva, Prasad says in Kamayani, "Neeche Jal Tha Ooper Jal Tha." There was water everywhere, only one Tatva was present . Prasad considers the world beautiful and blissful, because it is the incarnation of Shiva Himself:

"Kar Rahi Leelamy Anand, Mahachiti Sajag Huye Sevyast,

Vishwa Ka Unmeelan Abhiram, Isee main Hotey Sub Anurakt."

In Trika philosophy, on the part of Shiva, bliss gives rise to Icha (desire to create). This desire cannot be fulfilled without Jnana (Knowledge) and creation(Kriya) is the power of Shakti. In Kamayani, Shraddha tells Manu, about the triangle of Icha, Jnana and Karma whose centre point is Manu himself. Desire, Knowledge and creation have to assimilate to get bliss in life. Will is the centre of human activity, but it is to be sublimated with Jnana, Knowledge of differentiating between good and bad. Manu performs Yajnya, from which Ida is born. Ida helps Manu in establishing the kingdom but Manu's Bedhbudhi allures him and he wants to acquire Ida. Ida punishes and leaves him. Disillusioned and disappointed Manu reviews his attitude and goes back to Shraddha. Her devotion wins Manu back. Kashmir Shaivism gives importance to Bhakti. Shraddha is the embodiment of Bhakti(devotion). Ida is Buddhi Tatva,which is incomplete without Bhav and Bhakti. In Rahasya Sarg of Kamayani, Shraddha takes Manu to the peaks of Himalayas, shows him ichalok, jnanalok and karmalok. She explains that unless three worlds are in unison, there is no happiness. In the end both of them reach a place where these three worlds of Icha, jnana and karma unite. There is peace harmony and bliss there. Prasad says:

"Swapna.Swap, Jagaran Bhasma Ho, Icha, Jnana Khiya Mill Laye They,
Divya Anahat Per Ninad Mein, Shraddhayut Manu Tanmay They"

Thus Prasad has woven the Kashmir Shaive Darshan in the story of Manu, Shraddha and Ida asserting that Manu is incomplete without Shraddha as Shiva is naught without Shakti. Harmony is the essence of Tikka Darshan. Prasad also gives the message of harmony through Kamayani. Dr Bhanwarmall Joshi in his book "Kashmir Shaive Darshan and Kamayani," explains how Shaiva philosophy is knitted in Kamayani. Dr Balji Nath Pandit a well known authority on Shaiva philosophy has written an important book on "Shri Kashmir Shaive Darshan," in which he analyses the concepts and doctrine of Kashmir Shaivism. He explains the dichotomy of Kashmir version of Shaiva philosophy i.e. Spanda, the vibration system and Pratibhijnya, cognition system and analysis trik philosophy which is Kashmir's contribution to Shaiva philosophy. Shri Ram Chandra Dwedi also has written a book on Kashmir Shaive Darshan titled Kashmir Ki Shaiva Parampara, Explaining the legacy of Shaiva philosophers. Shri Gopi Nath Kaviraj also has written an important write up on "Kashmir Shaive Darshan" and its advaita philosophy in "Kalyan Ka Shivang," a special issue of Kalyan.Acharya Shri Dina Nath Shastri and Shri Badri Nath Shastri have explained the principles of Shaivism. In article "Shivratri Ka rahasya", "tatha Uski Darshanik Preshtabhoomi." They have explained the rituals and customs of Shivaratri along with their origins and mythological backgrounds. Swami Lakshmanji,an exponent of Shaiva philosophy, has edited "Gitartha Samgraha of Abhinavgupta and Utpala Strotavali with Hindi commentary and footnotes. According to him Kashmir Shaivism is basically "an enquiry into the truth of human experience," Pt. NeelaKanth Gurtu has translated Kashmir Shaive Darshan Grantha - Parmarthsar in Hindi. Its about the secrets of param shiva and srishti.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF KASHMIR IN HINDI LITERATURE

Dr Shatrughan Prasad's historical novel "Kashmir Ki Beti" (daughter of Kashmir) is based on the last Hindu queen of 14th century - Kota Rani. It depicts the weaknesses of king Suhdev and Udayandev, Pt. Devaswami's conceit, political moves of Samant Ramachandra, - Bhot Rinchin and Shahmir's coming to Kashmir for refuge and other details of happenings between 1320 - 1339 A.D. Dr. Prasad tells the story of Kota Rani's political dexterity, her chivalry and valour by which she tried to defend Kashmir from invaders and conspirators. She ultimately had to give in Shamir's treacherous and evil designs, inspite of putting up a brave fight. Shahmir desired to marry her but she fouled his plans by comitting suicide. Dr. S. Prasad has treated the subject psychologically and with a deft hand. He has given heart rending touches to Kota Rani's and Dalit Chandani's tragic end. Dr. Krishna Bhavuk has written a novel "Hara Darpan" (green mirror) which is based on the life of Kalhan, the author of Rajtarangini. Dr. Bhavuk does not only write about Kalhan's personal life but gives an insight into the socio - political system of Kashmir in Kalhan's time.

Dr. Bhagwati Sharan Mishra, an expert on weaving novels based on historical and mythological characters, has written a novel "Kakey Lagon Paun", in which he explains the reasons of Guru Tegh Bahadur's sacrifice. A group of Kashmiri pandits, harassed and terrorized by Aurengzeb's Subedar "Iftekhar Khan", comes to Anandpur Saheb to meet Guru Tegh Bahadur and seek his help. The pandits tell the Guru, how the subedar taxes them heavily and forces them to either change their religion or be prepared for death. The guru consoles them and assures them of his help. Dr. Mishra writes sensitively about the plight of Kashmiri Pandits and Guru Tegh Bahadur's determination to save Hindu dharma. The author concentrates on the value system and humanism, which is the pivot of his novel. Dr. Raghunath Singh also shows keen interest in the history of Kashmir. His book "Kashmir Keerti Shikhar", is based on the historical developments of Kashmir between 601 to 980 AD. In this book Dr. Singh gives some details about general Cunningham, Buhler, Stein and other foreign scholars as it was because of their interest and work that the history of Kashmir was knows to the world. Dr. Singh has based the story, from Durlabh Vardhan to Didha Rani, on the research done by these scholars. His another book is based on Joan Raja's Rajtarangini, in which he gives his own view point and assessment between the times of two Rajtaranginis. He writes that Kalhan lived in better times, while in Joan raja's time hindu kingdom had given way to muslim rule. There were despots like Sultan Sikandar and benevolent secular minded ones like Zain-ul-abdin.

We find Kashmir in Shaligram Mishra's novel, "Khajuraho Ki Nagar Vadhu" also. Here the hero of the novel goes to Kashmir during the reign of Didda Rani, where he sees lots of unrest and intrigues going on.

Gurudatt's novel "Umadti Ghatayen" also describes Kashmir. It is placed in the time of Aryan's rule, which is based on Pauranik facts rather than historical.

Dr. Ram Vilas Sharma has written a few articles, discussing Kashmir not only in puranas and vedas, but in epic Mahabharat also. He concludes from ancient evidences, that after pandavas, king Lav was the ruler of Kashmir. Lolar Nagar was named after him only.

Dr. Madhubala Kulshreshtha has written a detailed paper on the history of Kashmir. Starting from 232 B.C., around which king Ashoka ruled in Kashmir, she gives a consiled account of hindu kings, muslim, sikh and dogra rulers, upto Sheikh Abdullah's time. It is a thoughtfully written article showing the greatness of king Lalitadityar, Avantiverman, Suyya's Changing the course of river Vitasta and the causes of the decline of Hindu Kingdom, Muslim, Sikh and Dogra rulers.

Some writers have done research on the position of woman in ancient Kashmir, which is based on Neelmat Puran and Kalhan's Rajtarangini. They describe, how the women in Kashmir were, not only respected, but enjoyed a lot of freedom and contributed to Dharma, politics and family earnings also. Yashovati was coronated by Krishna himself. It was during the muslim rule that parda system and other curbs were enforced on them.

Kashmir depicted in modern literature

Almost all the important Hindi writers have mentioned Kashmir in some of their works, though their viewpoints and interests are different. Gyanpeeth award winner, versatile writer Ajneya has seen different phases of Kashmir in his travelogues, short stories, poems and novels. In his novel "Shekhar Ek Jeevani", Shekhar goes to Kashmir and is enchanted by the power of serene beauty of Himalayas. Shekhar wanders in search of real beauty and finds it in deep woods, devdar and bhoj trees. He crosses playful streams, smells the pleasant aroma of herbs and stops near a calm and clear lake where the veil of mist coming down the mountains makes it magnificent and mysterious. Shekhar sees a divine light here which is almost self revealing. He writes the most beautiful story in this pristine atmosphere. In another novel "Nadee Ke Deep" also the main character of the novel Bhuvan goes to Kashmir. He goes for research on cosmic rays. He believes that these cosmic rays, this shakti, which is scattered everywhere, is Param Tatva, Shiva himself. He travels with his beloved Rekha to Pahalgam, Julian Lake and other places. He is almost obsessed with the beauty of nature, that is why he asks Rekha to sing a song in honour of roaming clouds over hills and soothing breeze.

Ajneya sees heights of beauty in Kashmir. Walking through the woods of Kashmir, he listens to the music of birds which is listening to the unseen, where, in Octavio Paz's words, he feels 'the pleasure of walking through the gallories of echoes and gardens of transparent trees, where sounds think and thoughts dance.'

Ajneya, in his travelogues also shows his love for the spiritual beauty of Kashmir, but does not show interest in social aspect of life in Kashmir.

Another veteran writer, Upendra Nath Ashk has written many short stories and a novel based on Kashmir. Most of his stories see Kashmir with a visitor's eye. In his famous short story, "Kahani Lekhika Aur Jhelam Ke Saat Pul" Ashk writes about a writer, who visits Kashmir along with her husband and son. She wants to write a story on the seven bridges of Srinagar, but when she starts her journey from the first bridge, Amira Kadal onwards, she starts feeling that the city is dirty and overcrowded. It would have been better to stay in Pahalgam. Her husband, while going through, the bund and seven bridges, calculates how he could do some business, buying Kashmiri shawls and handicraft articles in cheap rates and sell them in plains on higher rates. Ashk wants to show the mentality of some visitors, who neither can enjoy the beauty of Kashmir, nor can see the needs of poor people. The couple does a lot of bargaining with poor Shikarawala and gives him less money than the govt. rates. In the end they get nothing but headaches. The writer wants to convey that unless you go deep down the psyche of people and see things in human perspective, you can not write stories. Ashk has written a novel "Barf Ka Dard", which is based on a poor shepherd boy of Gulmarg. Ashk is a master craftsman. He satirically probes into the mentality of visitors and writes about exploitation and class differences.

Yashpal, the famous writer of mega novel "Jhootha Sach", also has written a few stories based on Kashmir and its people. His stories "Neeras Rasik", "Mackerel", and "Darpok Kashmiri" are some of them. In the story "Darpok-Kashmiri", writer goes into the psyche of a poor farmer "Hafza", who is very timid and has learnt to lead a very submissive life under all kinds of pressures and calamities. Yashpal wants to convey through this story that Kashmiris were under the subjugation of kings and had learnt to obey and suffer in silence. Their poverty, oppression and ignorance made them cowards, but on attaining freedom they proved that they could fight for their rights.

The sensitive writer of "Aashad ka ek divas", play, novels and short stories -Mohan Rakesh has spent some time in Kashmir valley. He has written a no. of travelogues and short stories on Kashmir. "Pathar-al-Pathar", "Ek aur Zindagi" and "Sauda" are some of them. In Sauda, author tries to convey the miserly attitude of visitors through lala's character, who is reluctant to give even a paltry sum of "bakshish" to poor ponywallas. Both of them are adamant. Ponywalla wants to earn his livelihood and the visitor wants the maximum out of the minimum.

Mohan Rakesh probes into the causes of human behaviour and ironies of life.In "Gulmarg ki ek raat", he is thrilled by the snow covered atmosphere, but it makes him feel lonely also. He has also written memoirs about Wular Lake, Liddarvat, Tarsar, Marsar and other beautiful places of Kashmir, which are very vivid and interesting.

Celebrated Hindi writer Mridula Garg also has written a couple of short stories based on Kashmir, "Glacier se" and Daffodils Jal Rahe Hain". In the former she has described the attitude of a young woman who goes to Sonamarg for honeymoon. She is enchanted by the beauty of glaciers, snow covered hills and the free life of shephards. Her heart swells with the desire of being one with the nature, so she leaves her husband in the hotel and mingles freely with shepherd boys, enjoys sledge rides with gujjars, leaving all middle class taboos, norms and artificialities of urban life. Mrdula compares the rural and urban lifestyles and shows the urge of a woman to be free from taboos and restrictions of urban society.

Manjul Bhagat also has written a story "Sailanion ka Kashmir", which is based on the attitude and mentalities of visitors who come from plains to visit "heaven on earth". They come to the valley for enjoyment but can not take off their throughts from their business profit and losses. This story also is seen through the eyes of a visitor, though with an insight.

Writer, editor and script writer Kamleshwar has visited Kashmir several times and observed the socio-political setup of the state closely. He has edited a book, "Bhartiya Shikhar Katha Kosh", in which the translated stories of Kashmiri writers are included. In his book, "Kashmir rat ke bad", he analysis the present turbulant times of the valley and tries to find the causes behind the militancy and terrorism of Kashmir. Kamleshwar, giving the brief history of Kashmir, after the independence, writes about the present scenario, the exodus of minority community, disillusionment of Kashmiri Jihadis about Pakistan and precarious position of B.S.F. and Indian Army. He throws light on other disturbing issues of the state also, but does not pen down the sorrows and difficulties, genocide and exodus of an ethnic minority, who has become refugee in her own country.

Some of his novels and short stories also are placed in Kashmir. His memoirs about great progressive Kashmiri writer Dina Nath Nadim are intimate and touching. He writes about the simple and amicable personality of Nadim, his social consciousness, activism, fighting for the cause of the exploited and calls him great writer of Kashmir, whose contribution to Kashmiri poetry is immense.

Veteran fiction writer Bhishma Sahini has written many short stories based on Kashmir. His khandhar, Vangchu, Murgichor are some of them. Bhishma Sahini has spent some of his childhood time in Kashmir. In Khandhar story, writer goes to Kashmir along with his friends. He visits his old home which has become a ruin as nobody lives there. He collects some old articles and broken pieces of cutlery from the house, while his friends collect antiques from Martand and other historical places. This is a moving story which reminds us of the association and love of lost things in life. Vangchu is the story of a Baudh Bhikhshu, who comes to India from China and goes to Kashmir with the writer. He depicts Kashmir in this story. There is vitasta, Nehru's procession on A the river and other scenes of Kashmir, which make the valley alive before our eyes. Bhisma jee's stories are gripping and touching.

Pt. Sudarshan also has written a story, "Gulab", which is based on Kashmir and its people.

We have many reputed and upcoming Hindi poets who have written poems in appreciation of Kashmir. Earliest poem of this kind is Shridhar Pathak's poem "Kashmir Sushma". In this poem, captivated by the enchanting beauty of nature, the poet calls Kashmir 'surlok' and 'surkanan', an abode of Gods. "Kai Yeh Jadoo Bhari Vishwa Bazigar Thailee". Here the poet calls Kashmir, the creation of a magician, who has emptied his magic bag on the hills of the valley. Queen nature in cheerful mood, watches her pretty face in crystal clear waters of lakes here and is bewitched by her own beauty.

The poet is overwhelmed with the unparallel beauty of nature, the breezy chinars, gurgling brooks and lofty snow covered mountains of Kashmir. His poem, with the mixture of Brij and Awadhi words, resembles the medievial period of Hindi language.

There are many names between Harivansha Rai Bacchan and Rajesh Jain, Sunita Rawat, who have written poems about the rich natural beauty and cultural heritage of Kashmir. Balshouri Reddy praising Kashmir, calls it Crown of India. Sushma Priyadarshani in her poem "Kashmir" is sad, because of the militancy in the valley, where even air breaths fear these days. Sudha Gupta in her poem "Kashmir kee vadiyaon ke liye" prays for the normalcy in the valley. Suryabhanu Gupt says in "Kargil ke Bachey" that children of Kargil and Drass have learnt to live in the shadows of terror. They will grow up listening to the horror stories of war on Batalick and Mashkoh hills. Rajesh Kumar Vyas in his poem "Kashmir", Virendra Sharma in "Kesar Kyari ki pukar hai", Raj Karan Verma in his poem "Kashmir" and Subhash Razdan in "Kyon Har Ek Ke Hath Mein Bandook Hai", have lamented over the bloodshed in the peaceful valley of Kashmir. Swaroop Narain Pishan fondly remembers the snow in "Himpat". There are memories of Kashmir in these poems.

Travelogues and Memoirs

Dr. Dharamvir Bharti, Vishnu Prabhakar, Ajneya, Mohan Rakesh, Devendra Satyarthi, Shama, Padma Sachdev and many others have written travelogues and memoirs about Kashmir.

Dr. Dharamvir Bharti, the renowned writer, editor has written very impressive travelogue about Kashmir "Ek Yaad Ek Prarthana". He has pen down the intimate memories of remote hights of Kashmir valley, gujjars, krishna ganga, jungles of bhoj trees, Gurez valley and the simple people living in hills of Kashmir. He speaks high about the Sanskrit poets, kshemendra, kalhan, shaiva darshan, persian poetry and composite culture of Kashmir. He writes about Habba Khatoon, Lalded and "Habba Khatoon ka Chashma", He further writes about village people's belief, that Habba jumped from the hills near Krishna Ganga into the river, as Yusuf had doubts about her faithfulness. There flows a running brook, which reminds people of Habba and her sincerity. The writer is sad on the turn of the events, which have created a breach between man and man. He shows his love for Kashmir, which is part of Indian ethos and prays for better times to come.

Vishnu Prabhakar, a veteran Hindi writer, remembers Kashmir in 'Amarnath Yatra.' He is spellbound by Liddar river, Pissu Ghati, Sheeshnag, Amarnath cave and moonlight on snow. Vishnu Prabhakar writes about the myths and beliefs about the various places like Vawjan, where vishnu sent seshnag to kill vayu demon and so on. In Amarnath, he gets the experience of virat and feels one with Shiva. Vishnu Prabhakar does not only praise the beauty of Kashmir but probes into its mythology and history also.

Devendra Satyarthi, the respected writer, who is well known for traveling in search of folk lores and folk tales of different states in India, has worked on Kashmiri folk songs also. He went to Kashmir and was highly impressed by Mehjoor's poems. According to Devendra Satyarthi, Mehjoor's poems are like folk songs, which he used to hear in his young age. They are full of life's zest, brotherhood, love and hope for the down trodden. He has praised Mehjoor's broad vision of life.

Dr. Ramdhari Singh Dinker, the eminet Hindi poet also visited Kashmir and wrote his memoirs. He called Kashmir "Kavyabhoomi", as its lakes, mountains and serene beauty of nature make the place a dreamland and a land of poetry. The poetry of Kashmir seemed to him, as inspiring as nature itself.

Krishana Nath, the famous thinker and critic also has written travelogues about Kashmir, and so has Dr. Vidyaniwas Mishra, Mohan Rakesh, Ajneya, Padma Sachdev, Shama and Chaman Lal Sapru. They have praised the richness of nature, great writers like Nadim, Mehjoor, Saki and others, Shaiva Yogini, the first Kashmiri poetess Lalleshwari and others. Kashmir has been viewed as a part of Indian Culture by all these writers, who enriched India, by its composite culture and literary contributions.

Hindi Literature written by Kashmiri writers

We have many writers of Kashmiri origin, who write in Hindi language. Some of them write in both, Hindi and Kashmiri languages. Chana Kronfeld, associate professor in Hebrew, at the university of California, Berkley, calls this type of literature, minor literature. In her words, "Minor literature does not come from a minor language, it is rather that, which a minority constructs within a major language". The specific features, particular culture and problems of a society depicted in a wider known language, has its plus points, besides the possibility of its reach to a vast majority of people. Though all the writers write on human impulses and situations, as they define our lives, being an insider enables a person to know the minute details about the ethos of the locals better, unlike the tunnelled vision of an outsider. This can be seen in the works of Kashmiri writers, who write in Hindi language about Kashmir.

There are some well known names of Kashmiri writers, who have made significant contribution in the field of Hindi, which is our national language. Harikrishna Kaul, Shashi Shekhar Toshkani, Chandra Kanta, Sanjana Kaul, Maharaj Krishan Kaw, Agnishekhar and others from the valley and Padma Sachdev, Usha Vyas, Ved Rahi and others from Jammu are some prominent names.

Harikrishan Kaul writes in Kashmiri and Hindi, both the languages. Arthi, Tokri Bhar Dhoop and Is Haman Main,are some of his Hindi short story collections. Though Kaul has a wide canvas, his stories are rooted in Kashmiri socio-cultural system. In his story Topi, he uses the mythical tale of yaksha, to show the slave mentality of people. Even a child can make powerful Yaksha his slave if he snatches his cap from him. In Arthi story he delves deep into the psyche of Pedro's friends Tarzan and others who, while taking their friend's mother to cremation ground, want to stop for listening to cricket commentary. The writer gives a touching stroke to the story in the end by showing Tarzan weeping alone. He shows the inner loneliness and vacuum of the misguided youth, who are looked upon as emotionless vagabonds. His story, 'Hangul', shows the generation gap between the father and son and alienation in one's own home. How a person feels like a Hangul, who is on the verge of extinction. Kaul has written about the anarchy and corruption of govt. offices, effect of migration on people and other current problems. In "Is Rajdhani Mein", the writer shows how a person, uprooted from his place, feels an outsider and unwanted in a big city. Kaul is conscious about technique and style. He has a deft hand and deep insight. He has done a lot of translation from Kashmiri into Hindi. It is sad, that with all the depth in human situations, he has not written a single novel so far.

Sanjana Kaul, though a less known writer than Hari Krishan Kaul, has written short stories and a small novel also. Her stories, 'vishad yog' and "Pathar aur Ghat ka Zamana" depict the present chaos and uncertainty of Kashmir. In her novel,'Pashan Yug she has picturized the terror stricken atmosphere of the valley. There is killing on a large scale, minority community is forced to leave the homes by the threats of Jihadis, there are crackdowns and bombshellings and all that. Sanjana talks about militancy but does not go into the causes of it or raise a finger towards political setup of the state, for which there is scope in the novel. As one of our well known writers said, "Sanjana's novel is limited to the happenings, occuring between her downtown home and her college". Sanjana, however, has given an authentic description of the terror stricken valley. She has written some good stories, but some of them are overpowered by her ideology, which make the stories pamphlet of a particular ideology.

Chandra Kanta has twenty one books of short stories, novels and a poetry collection, to her credit. Some of her short story collections are Kali Barf, Badalte Halat Mein, Suraj Ugne Tak, O Sonkisri and Katha Nagar. Some of her novels are, 'Ailan Gulli Zinda Hai', 'Yahan Vitasta Behti Hai,' 'Katha Satisar,' 'Apne-Apne Konark." Ailan Gulli Zinda Hai, Katha Satisar and Yahan Vitasta Behti Hai, are based on Kashmir and its Socio-political scenario. Katha Satisar is the story of Kashmir from 1931 to 2001 AD. This novel depicts the composite culture of Kashmir, Socio-political changes during this period, which has made Kashmir, what it is today. In the background, there are myths, legends, folk tales, and checkered history of Kashmir, which helps in understanding the present day tragedy of Kashmir. Without giving my comments on my own work, I would like to quote a few intellectuals and writers who have given their comments on the novel, "Katha Satisar".

The reputed filmmaker and producer of "Kashmir file" Shri Arun Kaul says, "Katha Satisar novel is a "mahakavya" written on Kashmir. Shri Chaman Lal Sapru calls Katha Satisar a "Janatarangini of Kashmir". The veteran Hindi writer Manohar Sham Joshi says, "Ailan Gulli Zinda Hai, came in 1984 as a surprise to Hindi world. We knew Kashmir, with its cultural hues and traditions through 'Ailan Gulli'. 'Katha Satisar' completes the story of Kashmir upto new millenium". Pankaj Bhan, reviewing Katha Satisar says, "while the political and social background of the novel is authentic to the core, it is the human tragedy, as lived out by the characters as individuals and as members of a community that forms the staple of the novels content. Even though the novel records how Kashmiri pandits have been marginalized and finally thrown out, the writer is hopeful of a brighter future. In short, the novel is Tour-De-Force and perhaps the best work written so far, recording the goings on in Kashmir during the last 60 crucial years in a highly evolved fictional form. Katha Satisar holds a mirror to Kashmir, to Kashmiriyat and to us, and it shows our visage, warts and all, in amost authentic and truthful manner".

Chandra Kanta has written about two hundred stories, out of which fifty stories Kali Barf, Awaz, Badalte Halat Mein etc. are related to the trauma, through which the people of terror ridden valley and the migrant community are going. Her collection of poems, "Yaheen Kaheen Aas Paas" also talks about the present tragedy, past values of Kashmir, exodus, craving for homes and other human problems and disturbing questions.

Ratan Lal Shant writes in Kashmiri and Hindi languages. His "Khoti Kirnen" and "Kavita Abhi Bhi" are his famous poetry books. In one of the poems, Shant says, "My feet are caught in the vitasta and I have left them behind". There is pain, anger, yearning for lost homes and the impact of terrorism on people, but the poet does not leave hope. He wants to collect the scattered pages of the history of Kashmir and give Kashmir back its lost identity. He is confident that, though living in exile, he will write a new history of his motherland. In "Parchhayiyan", he probes into social problems, man woman relationship and insecurity of minority community. He lays stress on the effect of situations rather than elaborating on events. He is the editor of a journal, "Kheer Bhawani" through which he gives voice to Kashmiri masses in their present dilemma. He has done a lot of translation work also from Kashmiri to Hindi.

Shashi Shekhar Toshkhani, the writer of the history of literature of Kashmir is a researcher and a sensitive poet also. He, besides other books, has, "Thoda Sa Aakash", poetry collection to his credit. Through his poem, "Failega Hamara Maun", he conveys the message that though we, who have been forced to leave our homes, are silent on the injustice done to us, our silence will speak for us one day. The poet believes that the minority community of Kashmir, who has contributed richly to the cultural and literary traditions of the country, is facing threat to its identity as due to militancy we are living in exile in our own country. He calls people to rise against "sinister onslaughts seeking to destroy the pandit identity". Toshkhani is the editor of "Unmesh", a monthly newsletter of N. S. Kashmir Research Institute, which tries to safeguard the heritage and cultural identity of Kashmiri minority in exile.

Toshkhani has done a lot of translation work of Lalleshwari, Nadim, Arif and other Kashmiri poets and short story writers. He has written an important book on Lalleshwari, the Shaive Philosopher and the first Kashmiri poetess of Kashmir.

Maharaj Krishan Kaw has written a novel, short stories and poems in Hindi. He is a well known name in Hindi and english literature. In his novel, "Aasman Nahin Girte", he writes about the beurocratic system, its inner realities, and the problems of the honest officers, who want to improve the corrupt system. An IAS Officer Vijaya, who joins the industry department as a director, sees the corruption of the system and wants to improve it, but is not given a chance to do so. Instead she is put to lot of inconveniences and transferred from one place to another. Result is mental stress and breakdown. Vijaya is disappointed but neither wants to compromise, nor to give up. She goes to Delhi and then to Bombay, sees the same situation everywhere. She meets a poet friend, learns to think coolly and handle the situation without showing resistance, but without succumbing to frauds and opportunists. The writer in this novel, not only reveals the corruption of the government departments, but also shows its impact on people who want to correct it. The system has become a heap of dirt, where flies will come and breed diseases. Only strong willed and committed people can change this system.

Maharaj Krishan Kaw has written short stories also. His story "Dashanan", shows the power of money which can cover all evils and even crimes. Wanchu,a rich man tortures and kills his wife, but engraves her name on a dharmshalla and becomes a noble man in society. His another story, "Garbha" is based upon the relationship of father and daughter.

M. K. Kaw is a sensitive poet also. In his poem, "Jab Hum Phool Dekhte Hain", he probes into the selfish nature of man, who asks returns for even a small favour, while a tree gives shade to all without asking for returns. M. K. Kaw's Canvas is wide. His concerns are society, its changing values and mystry of life itself. He is president of Kashmir Education, culture and science society, through which he works for the preservation of Kashmiri culture and heritage.

Maharaj Krishan Santoshi has three collections of poems, "Burf Par Nange Paun", "Is Bar Shayad" and "Yeh Samay Kavita Ka Nahin", besides some short stories, to his credit. Almost all the contemporary writers of Kashmir have written about the physical and psychological impact of the mass exodus of the minority community from the valley. Maharaj Krishan Santoshi also has raised his voice against this human tragedy. Actually a sub stream of literature in exile has come into existence, as a result of this catastrophy. Maharaj K Santoshi, after being forced to leave home by Jihadi's, feels like a frightened deer, who is running through jungles. In "Goongi Jheel", the valley is in the grip of militancy. Even the lakes look dumb. There is darkness all around. How can he return home, where he is not allowed to light even a lamp? There is blood on snow. In the poem "Vitasta Mein Sawan", he asks rain to wash the stains of blood, which is flowing in his valley. The poet laments on the killings on the land of Rishis and Sufis. But he does not leave hope. He is sure that dark times will come to an end and this time the sun will come out from his naval, brighter than before.

In his short story "Apna Apna Aknandun", he uses the folk tale of Aknandun to depict the killings by militants, though the old stories have changed into new interpretations. Today Aknandan has no guarantee even for tweleve years. Anybody can be killed anytime, even the sanyasi can be murdered without notice. Santoshi's poems have clearity and intensity. He shows mirror to the existing turbulant conditions in the valley and the trauma of Kashmiri pandits in exile.

Agnishekhar is a writer and an activist. He has published two poetry collections "Kisee Bhe Samay" and "Mujh Se Cheen Lee Gayi Meri Nadi" and some short stories. He has written many thought provoking articles about the political setup of Kashmir and raised finger towards the rulers of the nation. He writes about the massacre of innocents, problems of migrants and violation of human rights. In the poem, "Mujh Se Cheen Lee Gayi Meri Nadi", he tells the militants, that they can abduct him and if they want, they can kill him also, but they should put his body to rest on his homeland, as he is craving to touch his motherland. His long poem, "Kalvriksha ki chhayan mein", depicts the present exodus of the minority community using the mythical history of Kashmir.

In his story "Bojh", he shows the sincerity of an erstwhile Armyman Ali Mohammad, who's son Shaukat becomes a militant. When Ali Mohammad fails to bring his son to senses, he hands him over to Army. Though his son gets killed in corssfiring, he feels relieved that he has proved his loyalty to his motherland.

Agnishekhar wants to convey that in the atmosphere of killing and distrust, there are sincere people like Ali Mohammad, who can sacrifice even their own children for their duty towards the Country. For Agnishekhar Poetry is a means to fight for a cause, though in this process, some of his poems like, "Pradhan Mantri Aur Makkhi", become merely a piece of complaint. But this does not make him less important as a writer, as he is committed to the displaced people, who are uprooted from their soil.

Avtar Krishan Razadan is another Kashmiri writer, who has described the changing times of Kashmir and their repercussions on people at large. Razdan has three short story collections, "Saugat", Oil Uchhla Dekhne" and L.B.W. besides a book "Kashmir Kee Lalit Kalayen", to his credit. His story, "Goli Ka Dar", based on the present turmoil of Kashmir shows, how the innocent boys of Kashmir are forced by Pakistani intruders to become militants. It is because of the fear of being killed by the Jihadis that they become killers themselves.

Kshema Kaul's literary concerns are strained relationships and the problems of exodus. She has written a diary, "Samay ke Bad" and a collection of poems, "Badlon mein Aag". Her poems contain the painful memories of loss of home and the difficulties of living in exile. She writes, "Ghar Pani Mein Tha, Beh Gaya", lamenting over the loss of identity along with the homes and hearths. In her poem, "shabd", she does not find a word in the dictionary, which can describe the mental and physical agoney of the displaced people, who, without any fault of theirs, have been denied the basic rights of a home and a normal life.

Maharaj Krishan Bharat has given voice to his physical and psychological sifferings in his poems, which are compiled and edited in his poetry collections, "Firan Main Chipaye Tiranga". Most of the poems of this collection are based on terrorism in the valley and its aftereffects. Bharat has painful memories of his home in the valley, which has been turned in a heap of charcoal by the militants. He writes about the difficulties and mental torture of living in tents on an alien land. There is pain of loss, helplessness on the migrant situation, and anger for the politicians, who, occupied in their own vested interests, have forgotten them totally. Bharat does not want his wounds to dry up, as they remind him of his being a slave refugee in his own independent country. But in spite of all the troubles, he does not give up hope, as it is hope, which keeps life going. Bharat has also translated some of the works of Khushwant Singh.

Shri Prithvi Nath Pushp, a veteran writer and translator of Kashmiri, has done lot of translation work of Lalleshwari and Habba Khatoon's poems, besides translating Kashmiri short stories in Hindi. He has written some moving poems on the pathetic condition of displaced people of Kashmir. He laments that, we, who were called the beautiful people of heaven on earth, have ecome strangers in our own homes. P. N. Pushp has written a book on the history of Kashmiri literature also.

Mohan Nirash, a well known Hindi poet of Kashmir has "Kavita Khanabadosh, Shunyakal, Ibarat Se Alag" and other books to his credit. He has translated many dramas and short stories from Kashmiri to Hindi. Though he ponders on all sorts of human situations, he has written some intense poems about the position of minority community of Kashmir. In one of his touching poem he writes, "Swarg main hi pravasi ho gaye, swarg main rehkar sabhi hum, swargwasi ho gaye". We lived in heaven, but heaven made us dead in our own heaven. We became outsiders in our own homes.

Upendra Raina has published two poetry books, "Cheekh Bhi Ek Bhasha Hai", and "Atmadah". Upendra writes about the complexities of socio-political system, which have a devastating effect on human lives. He also has written about the problems of migrants. In "Khoj" poem, he says, "We are running in our country, in the search of our own country".

Prithvinath Madhup has written "Mohtaj Nahin Naam Ke Vyatha", Babool Ke Saaye Mein Mogra", Ruki Nadi and other books. In the first book he remembers his beloved wife with intense feelings. Other poems are about the erosion of composite culture of Kashmir and disastrous effects of militancy. He also has done a lot of translation work in Hindi.

Hriday Kaul Bharti has a collection of short stories, chakravyuh. He writes about the irony of life and changing trends in Kashmiri society. Bharti has a gripping language, with a touch of satire in it.

Arjan Dev Majboor, a veteran Kashmiri poet, has written some poems and articles about the historical and cultural phases of Kashmir, in Hindi. The poet, who has been proud of the rich culture and heritage of Kashmir, is sad about the present scenario of militancy and its after effects. His poems reflect on the past glories and memories of lost homes.

A.D. Majboor has translated many Kashmiri poems and short stories in Hindi and has done some criticism work also.

Arun Kaul, the reputed film-maker of 'Deeksha' fame, has produced a long T.V. serial, 'Kashmir file'. Through the Kashmir file, he focussed on art, culture, history and literature of Kashmir, and made people aware of the composite culture of Kashmir, which is a blend of Shaivism, Buddhism & Islam.

Moti Lal Kemu, a reputed Kashmiri drama writer has written a book "Bhanda Natyam" which relates the history of Bhands, hafizas and other folk arts. He mostly writes In Kashmiri but his works have been translated in Hindi.

Gauri Shankar Raina is a play writer, translator, theater director and T.V. Producer. His collection of plays is "Ek Wohi Main". He has translated Moti Lal Kemu's plays "Tota Aur Aayeena, Palne ke Poot" and other dramas and staged his play "Lalla Main to Prem Diwani", "Nagar Udaas Hai" and "Bhand Duhai".

Gulam Rasool Santosh an artist, painter and writer has written a novel "Samandar Pyasa Tha" and poems which are collected in "Shakti Vichar and Vakh". Padamshree Santosh's poems are influenced by Kashmiri Shaive and Shakta philosophy.

Janaki Nath Kaul Kamal, has written in both Kashmiri and Hindi languages. He has contributed to Hindi poety, and written many thoughtful articles about culture and heritage of Kashmir.

Dr. Ayub Premi and Shantiveer Kaul also have translated Kashmiri literature in Hindi. Shiban Krishan Raina has written "Kashmiri Sahitya ka Itihas" and done a lot of translation work. He has translated Lalded, Arnimal, Habba Khatoon and other Kashmiri poets and short story writers in Hindi. His contribution to translation is very significant.

Khem Lata Vakhlu also has contributed to Hindi language by writing a novel "Jheel Main Hil", which is based on changing surroundings of Kashmir. Even the doen of Kashmiri Literature Dina Nath Nadim has written a poem, "Kaling Se Rajdhani Tak", in Hindi.

Mirakant has a collection of stories, "Hyphen" and a drama "Eha Mrig" to her credit. Her most of the stories are based on relationships. Some of them are placed in Kashmir. In "Eha Mrig", a researcher cum sculptor comes from, Martand Kashmir in Lalitaditya's time to "Mathura and Ujjain", where he meets a girl and falls in love. This is a story of clashes beetween the egos of man and woman.

Chaman Lal Sapru has many books to his credit. He is a social and cultural activist, who in his book, "Kesar Aur Kamal' explains the cultural ethos and social customs of Kashmiris. He gives an elabroate description of Kashmiri dresses, marriages, festivals, folk tales and other specialties. Sapru has edited a book on Dina Nath Nadim, the veteran writer of Kashmir, "Abhinandan Grantha". He has done a lot of translation work, which is compiled in "Santoor ki Awaz". He has been the editor of many Hindi journals, i.e. Satisar, Neelja and others,Sapru has done a commendable work in promoting Hindi in non Hindi-speaking areas. He looks after the Hindi Section of Koshur Samachar journal these days.

Omkar Kaul's short story collection, 'Mulakat' is mostly based on relationships. 'Umar kati Hai' and 'Ram Kahani' stories depict some hidden corners of relations between father and son and husband and wife. In "Sakhshatkar", he reveals the corrupt practices in educational system. "Kisine na suni" story is based on Hindu Muslim relationship, terror in the valley and exodus of Hindus of Kashmir. Kaul's language is clear and narration interesting.

Shambhu Nath Bhatt 'Haleem,' a Kashmir and Hindi poet is worried over the present turmoil in Kashmir, but believes in struggle and hopes for better future.

Virendra Patwari in his collection of short stories, "Kabh Bhor Hogi" hopes that present state of despair and diaspora due to terrorism in Kashmir, will end one day.

Shama a poet, painter and short story writer has written travelogues also relating to Kashmir. Some of her prominent books are "Jhelam ke moad", "Chinaron ke Aag" and "Peecha Karte Safar". Her poems and stories are full of past memories and present turbulant situations of the valley.

Triloki Nath Dhar, 'Kundan', has two collections of poems, "Main Samundra Hun", and "Main Pyasa Hun". His Vision is wide and philosophical.

Nirmal Kusum Kachroo has written some poems about Kashmir and memoires about Sharda Temple in Muzafarabad (Kashmir). "Sharda Ek Yaad" is beautifully written article, full of old memories and experiences of Kashmir.

Satish Vimal, writer of "Vinash ka Vijeta", poety collection, Ashok Saraf Ghayal, Mrinal Kaul Martand, Alpana Pandit, Dileep Kaul, Nimmi Pandita, Balkrishna Sanyasi, Sonika Durani, and other young and old writers have given vent to their strong emotions and feelings of loss due to terrorism in Kashmir. Shibban Krishan Malla, Ramesh Manvati and many more amateur writers are writing about the mental and physical stress of displacement, identity crises, and cravings for lost homes. A new wave of literature in exile is coming up like a huge wave from the sea of literature.

Shri Baikunth Nath Sharga has written an important book - "Kashmiri Panditon Ke Anmol Ratan". He is anxious about the decline of values and exodus of Hindu community from Kashmir, who have had high places in India earlier.

There are many writers who are writing about Kashmir and its past culture these days. Krishna Raina has written an important book, "Kashmir main Ram Sanskriti", depicting the Kashmiri Version of Ramkatha. Jia Lal Handoo, through his book, "Kashmir kee Adbhut Lok Kathayen" has tried to establish the lost values. Shri Nel Kanth Gurtu has translated Shaiva Darshan Granth, "Parmarath Sar" in Hindi, while Prithvi Nath Bhatt has translated Neelmat Puran, the earliest mythical history of Kashmir. Bansi Nirdosh and Avtar Krishna Rehbar, also have written some stories in Hindi, though basically they write in Kashmiri language.

Pyare Hatash, Sunita Raina (Chinar ke Ansun) Manmohan Vairagi, Ravinder, Ravi, Brijnath Betab, Makhan Lal Handoo and Swaroop Narayan Pishan also have written about their sufferings in exile and memories of homes.

Padmashree Padma Sachdev, who writes in Dogri and Hindi, has written many short stories based on Kashmir Valley, "Mera Gulla Kahan Gaya" is a touching story of an innocent Kashmiri boy. She has written a novel, "Navsheen", which revolves round a Kashmiri youth, who runs out of Kashmir because Jihaddies want him to join jihad and army suspects him to be a militant. Padama's poems have cherished memories of Kashmir, but "Navsheen" is not a balanced book, as it is silent about the pain and problems of migrant Hindus.

Usha Vyas, a sensitive writer, has written poems as well as prose. Her novel, "Kahin Koi Aasman", describes the problems of two girls, Vidisha and Nandita. One Kashmiri and other dogri. Her Story 'Baki Sooraj' is based on the militancy in Kashmir.

Ramesh Mehta's two poetry collections, 'Khule Kamre Ke Band Diwar' and Tinka Tinka Ghonsla' are his well known books. His poem "Yudhbandi" is a satire about ceasefire in Kashmir. He writes about the complexities of human relationships and present situation in Kashmir. His poems are deep and thoughtful.

Ved Rahi, is a well known Dogri-Hindi writer. His novel 'Andhi Surang' and stories 'kaun mara kaun mara jayega' are based on Kashmir. He writes about the innocent youth, who are mislead by Jihadis on the name of religion. His story "cross firing" is based on human relationships in times of militancy, where killings and care are two sides of the same coin. He shows his faith in human values through this story.

Nida Nawaz a sensitive Hindi poet of Kashmir, has written "Antaheen Mahasagar", and vitasta Sakshi Rehna poems, which throw light on changing values. Nida syas, "It is only love, which makes life worth living.

M. H. Zafar, also a Hindi poet of Kashmir, writes about the human relationships. He is sad about the bloodshed in Kashmir.

Suteekshan Kumar Anandam, Om Goswami, Chatrapal Jiten Thakur, Baljeet Raina, and other Dogri Hindi writers have written many stories and poems about the conflicts and dilemma of Kashmiris in times of militancy there. Dhamma Priya Bhanwar Singh has written a long poem, "Vitasta ke Anchal Main", in which he is concerned about the decline of the composite culture of Kashmir and problems of migrants. Dr. Bhuwaneshwari Tiwari has edited a book, "Hamara Apna Kashmir", in which twenty- seven non-Kashmiri poets have written about the beauty and cultural contribution of Kashmir.

In short, there is a long list of writers in Hindi, who show their concern and anxiety over the terrorism in Kashmir and its repurcussions on people. It is not possible to give all the names in this article. However, there are many Hindi writers who have settled abroad. They have come out with their strong feelings and reactions against the human loss in Kashmir. This article will be incomplete without mentioning their concerns.

Dr. Anjana Sandhir, a sensitive poet, who lives in New York, has compiled and edited a book, "Yen Kashmir Hai", which contains poems written by twenty seven N.R. is on Kashmir. Anjana in her poem, "Turn Bhi Socho, Hum Bhi Sochein" wants all of us to think, why Kashmir, where peace and harmony prevailed, has become a battlefield of blood and hatred. She has written many books besides "Barishon ka Mausam". Gulab Khanddwal, a Veteran poet, also lives in the U.S.A., has got forty-eight books to his credit. In his poem "Kashmir" and "Kargil ke Atikraman Par", he encourages the countrymen in India, to fight the enemy, who has attacked us and caused sufferings to innocents. Poet Dhananjay Kumar, writer of two poetry collections, "Adhuri Baat" and "Barf ki Dewar", also lives in the U.S. In his poems, "Bewa Kashmir" and "Tiger Hills", he mourns over the human loss in Kashmir. Preeti Sengupta, the winner of Vishwa Gurjari puraskar, has published twenty-four books and lives in New York. In her poem, "Faslay", she remembers the peaceful Kashmir and laments over the problems of people, caused by terrorism. Kalpana Singh Chitnis of California, the writer of "Chand Ka Paiband", poetry collection, writes about the pathetic conditions of people of Kupwara, who had to leave homes and take shelter in tents of Jammu, because of militancy in Kashmir. Pratibha Saxena, the writer of "Seema Ke Bandhan" and other books, also writes about the present turmoil of Kashmir and hopes for better future, so does Pushp Malhotra of New York, in her poem, "Ek Yaad, Ek Anubhav".

Rani Naginder of Jammu, who also lives in New York, has cherished memories of home, which she pens down in her poem "Mera Shahar". Bindeshwari Agrawal of New York, in her poem, Kya Hua Kashmir Tujhe" and other poems, is purturbed by killings in the valley. She assures Kashmir, if need be, we, who live in America will come and sacrifice our lives for you.

Poet Rakesh Khandelwal of the U.S.A., the writer of "Amavas Ka Chand", also is deeply disturbed by the killings in Kashmir. Rekha rastogi of New Jersy, a poet and prose writer expresses painand anger over the killings of innocent people and burning of houses. She has translated Lalleshwari's vakhs from english to Hindi. Renu Rajvanshi of Ohio, Lalit Ahluwalia of New York, Surender Nath Tiwari and Suresh Rai of the U.S.A. have shown anger on the ghastly killings, called militancy a business of corps and vowed, "we wont part with Kashmir, as it would be cutting a part from our body". Ved Prakash Vatuk of California, a versatile writer, in his long poem, "Kargil ke Bad", challenges the politicians, religious fanatics and irresponsible writers, who are insensitive about the killings of innocent people of Kashmir. He wants strong policies for ending the bloodshed in the valley.

Ved Prakash Singh of New York, Sarojini Sharma of Torrington, Sushma Malhotra of New York and Adil Mansoori of New Jersey, are deeply purturbed by bloodshed on pious land of Shaiva and Sufi Bhoomi. How can they go to Kashmir now, as saffron fields are filled with blood there? Susham Bedi, of New York, the renowned novelist of "Hawan" fame is sad, that a 'Puchal Tara' has risen in the sky of Kashmir. Subhash Kak of Kashmir, who lives in Louisiana, has ten books to his credit. In his poems "Shrinagar Main Himpat" and "Nirwasan", he remembers fondly his childhood days spent in his home Kashmir. He is deeply distressed that his community has been forced by militancy, to live in exile. But how can anybody snatch away one's memories, which are rooted in our minds?

All these N.R.I. writers are deeply distressed by human tragedy in Kashmir, while it is strange but true, that most of our contemporary Hindi veteran writers have become insensitive about the pain and problems of Kashmiris, especially the minority community people, who are living in forced exile in their own country.

To sum up I may say that literature is a parallel history of time, which the writers of Kashmir are writing in Hindi with passion and sincerity. But in these times of globalization, when everything is moving fast, one cannot waste time weeping over what has been lost. We have to catch up with the times, question the system, raise the voice, even work silently and come out of the debris of difficult times. We have to prove our identify and build a strong community. These days E-mail and internet connect us with the world, but it does not, as Tomas. L. Friedman says, "Build communities. It connects people for business, can't develop human relationship between the two." Literature does it, as it is a means of holding conversation with the world. So let us keep conversing with the masses. Let us ring the bells as Leonard Cohen says:

"Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is crack in everything
That is how the light gets in"

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PART IV

THE MODERN KASHMIRI

HALT THE CULTURAL EROSION...

There is a grave danger to the Kashmiri language. Disowned in its home state, it is also being neglected by the migrants after their displacement. What is needed is a rescue operation to set up cultural centres wherever there is a sizeable diaspora, in order to teach the Kashmiri language and preserve the age-old rituals, festivals and other cultural traditions.

CHAPTER 16

THREATS TO CULTURAL TRADITIONS DUE TO DISPLACEMENT

Dr. Roop Krishen Bhat

According to Sir Aurel Stein who translated *"Rajatarangini"* the celebrated book of the history of Kashmir from Sanskrit into English, "Kashmir has the distinction of being the only region of India which possesses an uninterrupted series of written record of its history." The archaeological excavations of Bourzahamal 5 Kms. from Srinagar establish its antiquity to beyond 3000 BC. It has now been established that Nagas were the original inhabitants of Kashmir and Kashmiris built their cultural traditions on the habits and customs of Nagas. The interactions between Vedic and Kashmiri traditions did develop in course of time but in Kashmir's religious literature the supremacy of Shiva over the vedic supreme God Indra has often been asserted. Buddhists and Jews have left tremendous influence on Kashmir history and culture. The transition from Nagas to Buddhism has been smooth. Influenced by Shavite- tantric thought of Kashmir, Buddhism got transformed into its Kashmiri version.

After that Kashmir has experienced situations of strife and Kashmiris had to struggle hard under alien rulers like Mughals, Pathans, Sikhs and Dogras. Muslim rule followed the conversion of a local ruler into Islam which resulted in many conversions thereafter. Being the inheritors of same cultural heritage, Kashmiris irrespective of religion, by and large share the living habits, i.e. food, costume, customs, rituals, festivals, besides the language.

The Kashmiri Hindu community is one of the most literate communities of the world. By virtue of their intelligence, dedication and devotion to duty, high level of professionalism and quality to mix up even with the alien societies, they are spread throughout the world. For Kashmiri Hindus the exodus from the valley has generally remained a gradual process throughout the course of history, however, certain political upheavals over a period of history have accelerated the pace of migrations and resulted in mass migrations. According to historical evidences mass migrations have taken place more than three times in the ancient times. In the modern period say since 1900A.D.Kashmiri Hindus have been migrating out of Kashmir to other parts of the country and the world over, for want of better education and professional opportunity. The recent foreign sponsored militancy going on in the state of Jammu and Kashmir for more than a decade now has once again resulted in mass migration and displacement of Kashmiri Hindus, who have by now resettled in various cities across the country as well as in other parts of the world. A large number of them are living in migrant camps in Jammu, Delhi etc. After Jammu the second largest concentration of displaced Kashmiris is spread in the NCR of Delhi including the towns surrounding Delhi, i.e. Faridabad, Gurgaon, Ghaziabad and Noida. Data for the present paper has been taken from this very area. The informants selected are from the lower middle class families who normally are believed to be very particular rather conservative about their language and culture.

The present paper describes in brief status of Kashmiri language after 1990 in and outside the valley. While focusing mainly on certain important customs and rituals of Kashmiri Hindus the paper also describes the living problems, life crisis, social interaction, climatic and environmental problems, adaptation to new circumstances, etc. The customs/rituals selected here are: *gorItrey, saniva:ri, shivratri-vaTukh barun, sontI/navreh- thaal barun, gaDI batl, khetsi ma:vas, ka:vI punim, shishur,* phrov, da:rI puza,, *baTni pheran tI taragI, hu:n' meT* etc. While dealing with the cultural aspect, there are bound to be references to the linguistic erosion as well.

For this study the cultural facets of Kashmiri Hindu Diaspora would be studied in relation to what and how they practiced various religio-cultural customs and rituals prior to the displacement (BD) and in what ways and to what extent have these been influenced/eroded after the displacement (AD). The study is aimed to serve as a mirror to the affected Kashmiris to evolve a strategy to tackle the life crisis and halt the linguistico-cultural erosion to the possible levels.

KASHMIRI LANGUAGE AFTER 1990

The post 1990 scenario has given rise to a dichotomy so for as the use of Kashmiri language by Kashmiri speakers is concerned. The insurgency and militancy has on one hand hampered growth of Kashmiri in Kashmir and on the other hand resulted in lot of borrowings into Kashmiri language, e.g. bomb blast, crack down, militant, commando, encounter, mujaahid, area commander, jahaad, etc. It has also given birth to new expressions like patl patl sE:b, thEk' bEk', h khI s'un, etc. The use of Urdu and other alien languages has increased. As per a statement of one of the professor's of Kashmir University many Kashmiri citizens of Srinagar have listed Urdu as their mother tongue during the recently conducted census. A deliberate attempt is made to alienate Kashmiris from the national main stream by belittling their language and culture. This trend has also reduced use of Kashmiri in both electronic and print media. The press in Kashmir is already dominated by Urdu language.However, in rural areas of Kashmir situation has not changed much.

The picture outside Kashmir is equally disgusting. Governed by the factors of resettlement and readjustment in new environs, after displacement from Kashmir, the attitude of displaced Kashmiris towards their mother tongue is very disturbing. The situation could be better described by dividing the displaced Kashmiris into three groups. L1 - people above 50 years of age, L2 -25 to 50 years and L3—below 25 years. While as L1 is very much conscious of their mother tongue and culture and adhere to it strictly. L2 finds itself in the middle of resettlement and are more worried about their livelihood and profession, though they know or have sound background of Kashmiri language and culture.But they are ready to sacrifice their language and culture for better financial opportunities or settlement. They are always looking for greener pastures and moving from place to place.

They hardly take interest in propagating, disseminating Kashmiri language and culture in L3. L3 generation who was mostly in early teens at the time of displacement or is born after displacement have gradually lost touch with Kashmiri language and culture and are acquiring the language and cultural habits of the surroundings in which they live. Keeping in view lukewarm attitude of L2 generation towards pestering on their children i.e. the L3 to learn and preserve their language and culture, there is every likelihood of L3 generation loosing their language and culture sooner or later, thereby threatening the very survival of Kashmiri language outside the valley.

RITUALS/CULTURAL TRADITIONS

gorltrey

This day falls on *magh shuklapaksh trey i.e. third day of magh shuklapaksh.* This day is marked as *guru akhshar gyan* when child is initiated to formal education by his *guru.*After performing the *sarswati pooja gurudhiksha* is given to the child usually by the *kul guru.* In ancient times knowledge or education used to be imparted to the children through the *gurkul* where the child or *shishya* would live with his *guru* and perform all routine chores under his supervision. This was the period which gave birth to *guru-shishya parampra* in India, *gorltrey* is the basis for all other rituals as followed by Kashmiri Hindus.

Amongst Kashmiri Hindus to be poor is not a drawback but to be illiterate is considered to be a sin.

AD

Though the Kashmiri Hindus are religiously living to their tradition of imparting education to their children on priority basis but the ritual of *gorltrey* is completely lost to the present generation. The *gurukul* system of education has now become obsolete and creches and preparatory schools have replaced the tradition of *gorltrey*. The term *gorltrey* itself is lost to the new generation.

Sanivarri

The literal meaning *of sanivaari* is "deep small pitchers" two in number made of clay or brass usually kept in the kitchen.These are the cultural symbols/signs which represent a particular belief These pots represent the *devtas* and ancesters of the house. These pots are filled with fresh water daily and fed with the dishes as prepared from day to day, being offered to the *devtas* and *ancesters* as *bhog* to invoke their blessings for the welfare of the family. At the time of *grehpravesh* the *sanivaaris* are being installed in the new house first of all.

AD

This ritual is completely lost after displacement and so is the related terminology including the words *sanivaari, garlvanj* etc.

Shivratri

Shivratri is the most important festival for Kashmiri Hindus. While as Shivratri is celebrated on 14th day *of phagun* outside Kashmir, in Kashmir it is celebrated on 13 day itself. Shivratri in Kashmir is celebrated as a wedding ceremony of Shiva with Parvati. Because Kashmir has remained an important centre of Shiva philosophy or shaivism and shiva bhakhati, therefore shivratri assumes great importance for Kashmiri Hindus. It is believed that it also depicts the beginning of the universe ie the *prakrati* "universe" came into existence on this day. For Kashmiris shivratri is not only an occasion for fast, prayers or pooja but celebration and pleasure, enjoyment and fun as well.

BD

The rituals/customs related to shivratri were spread over a month from *phagun Krishna pakhsh okdoh* "first day of *phagun* month" to *amavas.* Rituals started from *hur' okdoh* i.e. first day of the fortnight when right from the *vuz* "verandah" to *kE:ni* "second floor" of house entire house was cleaned and mopped. First eight days were spent in cleaning, sweeping, washing of the entire house, utensils and clothes etc. On *hur' E:Thim* "eighth day" bhajans were sung. All these eight days were preparatory days and would bring lot of cheer and enthusiasm about the festival. People would sing, dance, play games (cards, ha:rI).Tenth day was popular as *d'a:rI dEham.* On this day the newly wedded brides would bring riches from parents house to their in-laws house including *ha:rI.* The next three days after *d'yarI dEham* are highly ritualistic. Eleventh day is also named *ga:dI kah,* on this day fish would be cooked.The twelfth day is named as *va:gIr' bah.* On this day va:kh devi or saraswati or shakhti in the form of an earthen pot full of water saddled on grass a:san (seat), is being worshiped. This marks the beginning of *shivratri pooja. On* 13th day or *VaTakh he:rIts truvah,* utensils required for pooja are being brought inside the house. During earlier times and in present times in rural areas the potter man would bring all earthen utensils on this day. He would be ushered in the house after taking his a:rti *(a:lath)* at the gate. Normaly eleven different utensils would comprise the vaTukh. These represent the deities like Shiva, Parvati, *kalash,bE:rav, Bharatis* etc.(symbolic). These are filled with water from a stream or river and decorated by flowers etc and arranged in proper order in three rows.Walnuts are immersed inside these pots. The pooja which is highly ritualistic would be performed by a Brahmin and would go for several hours. Important rituals include making of *pa:rthi shwar-a shivling* of clay, *agon, a:huti,* filling of *Dul (*a big pot) with rice and dishes, pouring of milk, *kand-* sugar sticks, other *pooja samgri-* ingredients. General pooja would be followed by individual rituals which may vary from family to family like : pouring of ice, typical vegetables, small fish, blood of lamb etc. inside the *vaTukh.* Fast would be observed till the pooja is over.

The fourteenth day is celebrated as "sala:m". It is a day of celebrations. People greet each other. Friends and neighbours from other communities would also greet the Hindus on this day. Skilled people and craftsmen would bring gifts and receive *he;rIts kharIc* "pocket money for shivratri" in return. Children, sons-in-law and women also receive *he;rIts kharIc* on this day. On amavas or 15th day also called *Du:n' ma*vas"walnut amavas". There is a *visorjan of vaTukh "vaTukh parmu:zun"* Walnuts are distributed as prasada amongst all members, relatives and friends.

Eight days after *shivratri pooja* the earthen lamps used in *shivratri* would be floated in rivers and cane of old kangris and grass would be lit up to mark end of cold climate and beginning of warmth. There is a related saying *he:rIts patI kah doh natI nI kah* *doh* "cold climate could last upto eight days after shivratri or for none"

AD

After the displacement, whole concept and the mode of celebrations of this important festival has changed to a greater extent. The duration of the celebrations has been cut short. Changed environment, climatic conditions and structure and architecture of the houses/flats where Kashmiris have recently resettled has made a lot of difference. The rituals related to first 12 days are almost lost. The shivratri starts straightway from the 13th day i.e. by *vaTakh pooja.* Earthen utensils have been replaced by pots made of steel or brass.The size and number of pots has also been reduced. Instead of getting the pots filled with water from the rivers these are filled up from the taps inside the house/flat.The duration of *pooja* has also reduced. *Pooja* is performed through the help of recorded audio cassettes and printed books since the Brahmins are not easily available. People avoid cooking of non-veg dishes especially on *the pooja* day. Vegetarianism is growing. The main rituals lost are:

hur' okdoh, hur' satam, hur' E:Tham, dya:rl deha (exists in the form of bringing cash only),ga:DI kah,vaglr' bah, vaTtuikh kha:run,a:lath kaDln', pa:rthishwar bana:vun, ha:ran gindun, ta:s gindun, pouring of snow and blood in vaTtuikh, darva:zas Thuk Thuk karun (ra:ml bro:r) "knocking of the door" etc. The floating of earthen lamps in rivers, on eighth day after shivratri *(ti:ll E: Tham)* is completely lost. The liting up of the *kangri* canes/ grass etc is also lost. These rituals are perhaps irrelevant to the present climatic conditions.

LANGUAGE LOSS

It may be added that the younger generation born after displacement have no concept of these rituals and these words do not find place in their diction. Generally these vocabules are also lost to the L 3 generation. Other related terminology lost is *bra:nd* "porch", *bra:ndl kEn'* "porch stone", *bra:nd livun* "mopping of porch" *Thokur kuTh* "pooja room". All this was of great religio-cultural significance to Kashmiri Hindus before displacement.

tha:l barun

This is an important custom amongst Kashmiri Hindus. It literally means " filling of thali i.e. a dish pot". This is done on two occassions. (l) on navreh "new year day" of a Hindu calender and (2) so:nth "(first day of) spring season". Both these customs have climatic and seasonal significance.

BD

So:ntI tha:l:

After a prolonged cold season the setting up of spring would bring a lot of cheer and relief to the people in Kashmir, they therefore would greet the beginning of spring with enthusiasm and optimism. On the eve of spring they would arrange a *tha:l* (a dish plate of bronze or steel), fill it with rice, and cover it with following articles/commodities: salt, sugar, milk, pen, a piece of grass, walnut, a currency note etc. All these articles/commodities have their specific relevance and are important for the existence of humans. The tha:l would be covered for the night and early in the wee hours *of so:nth* the lady of the house or any youngster would carry this *tha:l* from bed to bed to show it to everybody in the house. All family members would start their day after having the glimpse of this decorated tha:l. This would reassure good beginning of the spring for them.

navreh tha:l

Like the *so:ntl tha:l,* people would also decorate a *tha:l* on the eve of new year of the local calendar *(tsitrl okdoh).* On similar lines a *tha:l* would be filled with rice and all items as mentioned above arranged in it. An additionallity would be a new year jantri (almanac or *panchang) and* blossoms of plants/lily flower which is available by then. The panchang is very relevant to the beginnig of new year. Again the *tha:l* would be covered for the night and on the wee hours of new year "*navreh*" it would be rotated among all family members and guests if any. It may be seen that all the contents of the *tha:l* are very relevant to the new year hence everybody would be enthusiastic to start the year with all significant things and thereby be sure of a happy and prosperous new year.

AD

tha:l barun ritual is almost observed in majority of the displaced Kashmiri families which comprise of LI generation on both the occasions of *so:nth* and *navreh,* with slight changes in their contents. In L2 group it is observed half heartedly. The contents related to the climate like grass or flowers may not be the same for obvious reasons. However, these rituals do not mean much to the younger generation i.e. the L3. For them the main attraction is to collect money from the members whom they would show the *tha:l.* The vocables lost are bred' *mushuk*" a kind of flower" *vay ganDIr,* " " *dramun,* "grass"

GarDI batl and khetsi ma:vas

These rituals are part of many such rituals being observed to appease or placate *Yakhshas* to avoid a curse or evil and to ensure peaceful co-existence. Both these rituals are celebrated during winter. Due to snow fall it is believed that many *yakhshas* and evil spirits roam around in opea *ga:DI batl* literally means fish and rice. It is prepared in the evening and a *tha:l* full offered to the *garl devta* " house lord", by keeping it in open on the top floor of house for garl devta to eat. After that family members would eat. *khetsi ma:vas* literally means *"khicDi amavas".* On the amavas day khicDi would be prepared in the evening and offered to *yakhshas* outside the house. Remaining would be eaten by family members themselves.

AD

Both these rituals are time, place and climate specific therefore have lost their relevance and are now observed for the fun sake only in very selected families. All related vocabulary like *khetsIr "khecDi ",yach "Yakhsh ", garl devta* " House God", is lost to L3

Ka:vl punim

ka:vl punim "Purnima of crows" as it is popularly called is celebrated exactly a month prior to the Shivratri. On this day, early in the morning rice puddings are served on a specially designed *ka:v potul* " a triangle shaped plate made out of twigs of willow and grass".Children would with great enthusiasm participate in this ritual by inviting crows to their houses by singing a folk song- *ka:vl baTI ka:va*

AD

This ritual is completely lost now and so is the related vocabulary like *ka:vlpotul* and the folk song-*ka:vl baTI ka:va...*

shishur

This ritual is climate specific. It is celebrated towards the end of winter. It has two components. (1) Due to a very severe cold winter people are fed up and are eager to bid farewell to winter by collecting all winter related items, costumes, utensils, shoes etc. and tie them together in one rope and drag them out of houses, symbolizing dragging out the winter. A line of lime is also drawn around the houses to keep the evil spirits away. (2) To prevent themselves from the *yakhshas* and other evil spirits attributed to the winter lime powder and *til* is put together in a small piece of cloth given a triangular shape and tied on the clothes of a newly born baby and the new brides. Feast is arranged on this occasion for the guests.

AD

The first component is completely lost and the second is still celebrated in some families for the sake of enjoyment.

phro:v

This is again related to winter. Bundles of grass and effigies of winter are burnt to say good bye to winter. *jatu:tu* " burn burn" is repeatedly sung, children participate in this ritual enthusiastically.

AD

This ritual is also completely lost and so is the related vocabulary like *phro:v* and *jatu:tu*

darl pu:za

da:rl pu:za "dwar pooja" used to be an important component of Kashmiri Hindu marriage before displacement, while welcoming the bridegroom at the main door of the house pooja would be performed by Guru ji.

AD

This ritual is completely lost after displacement. Main reason is that most of the marriages are now conducted outside the main house of bride's parents i.e. in community *banquet* halls etc. A related custom of seeing off the bride through a window of the parent's house, instead through the main door, has also been lost. Displacement has also resulted in adaptation of new or alien cultural traditions e.g. *jaimala* has become an important ritual in marriages and so is addition of non *Kashmir cuisine* like chats and other stalls. *Lagan mahurat is* seldom followed nowadays and video cameras have assumed enough importance. Rituals and customs are modified rather choreographed to suite the camera.

baTni pheran tl tarangl

Pheran is the oldest of all Kashmiri dresses rather the only typical Kashmiri dress which continues to be used even now. Kashmiris may wear any type of dress but Pheran is still used. Infact if we go back into the history of just one hundred years we find that an average Kashmiri used to put on only one dress that is pheran. Pheran in ancient times used to be just single designed dress, slowly with the passage of time variations started creeping in on the basis of sex and religion. Now we have Hindu pheran, Muslim pheran, gents pheran and ladies pheran.

tarangl is a specially designed head gear worn by old Hindu ladies and the Hindu brides on marriages only. Its important components are *shi:sh la:Th, zu:j, kallpush, sltsni* etc.

BD

Before the displacement, Hindu old ladies used to wear a typical pheran called *baTni pheran.* It used to be specially designed and comprised of certain typical attachments like *nEr 'va:r, Du:r la:d lu:ng'* etc. It would be supplemented by an inner lining of white cotton cloth called *po:tsh. tarangl* also was worn by old ladies along with the pheran.

AD

baTni pheran has now been replaced by *saris* and *tarangl* completely discarded. As an important ritual *tarangl* is only worn by the brides on the marriage day alone. All vocabulary related to the *pheran* and *tarangl* like *la:d, Du:r, nEr'va:r, potsh, shi:shla:th, zu:j* etc is lost toL3.

Fashionable *pheran* is now used by young Kashmiri ladies during winter. Such *pherans* have now received wider acceptance amongst the women of other communities as well.

hu:n' meT

It was customary for every Hindu to start eating food by offering the first morsel to a dog. This was called *hu:n' meT.* This ritual is completely lost after displacement.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS

i. A Kashmiri house had certain culturally important portions like *bra:nd, voT, kE:n, Thoktir kuTh, vuz, Dab* etc. Important rituals, customs or *sanskars* were performed at these places. All these concepts are lost to the L3

ii. The joint family system has broken down. Hence kinship terms and certain rituals necessary for living together are lost

iii. Vocabulary related to flora and fauna is lost.

iv. Important cultural items like *kangri* and *samava:r* are lost.

v. Preparation of yellow rice *tEhar* on birthdays and other occasions is becoming rare.

vi. Embedded deep in the society the *sanskars are* transmitted from generation to generation through various means. As per Hindu shastras a Brahmin has to perform 16 sanskars starting from *garbadhan to antim sanskar. Kashmiri Brahmins were equally strictly* *performing most of these sanskars before displacement* but with the passage of time very few are observed now.

CONCLUSION

From the above description it is clear that the change of environment, climate, economic and social settings, are important factors responsible for erosion of Linguistico-cultural traditions. While as LI is alive to their cultural moorings and keen to retain these. L2 is struggling between the old traditions and new requirements, L3 does not want to look back and is busy to adopt the new way of life.

RESCUE MEASURES

Since language and culture are the most important factors for survival and identity of a community necessary measures are to be taken to preserve it and rescue the community from loosing its cultural moorings. I quote Braj B Kachru 2000, "It appears that the wave (of language death and decay) has already engulfed the Kashmiri language so for as Kashmiri Pandit community is concerned. It is present in the refugee camps which the Indian Govt. and the media, in a semantically offensive and demeaning way, have termed camps for "migrants" from Kashmir. The doom is active in the diasporic contexts, permanent and temporary, and it is noticeable in the melting pot contexts in USA, Britain and in several Asian countries where Kashmiris both Hindus and Muslims have relocated in small numbers."

A community is known and named only through the language hence it is obligatory to preserve it. Necessary measures are to be taken to conduct language teaching programmes for youngsters. Parents and NGO's have to shoulder the responsibilities.

I have been insisting and have said it elsewhere as well that we open Kashmiri Cultural Centers in every city with a sizable population of Kashmiris, such centres would function as nodal points with complete cultural ambience; centers should have facilities like learning and speaking of Kashmiri language, well equipped library, art gallery, audiovisual corner, seminar room, an auditorium etc. The centers would be organizing cultural and social functions, language camps, seminars, workshops etc. Such centres should emerge as substitutes to clubs and other time pass joints.

Besides propagating and disseminating Kashmir language and culture amongst L3 it is essential to record and document with authenticity and rationality all cultural traditions, rituals, symbols, signs, folklore and oral history of Kashmiris. The recorders and keepers of past have a greater role to play when groups, communities and societies are lurking for and searching for their *identity.* The *showcasing of culture* shall not help as is the habit of some affluent Kashmirs to preserve certain Kashmir cultural items like *samavaar, kangri* etc. in their drawing rooms as decoration pieces. Preserving certain items like *saniva:ris* the symbols/signs representing certain Kashmir traditions or beliefs would help only in case these are made functional.

Displaced Kashmiris have also created /constructed *replicas* of some important *shrines* of Kashmir at various places like Jammu, Faridabad etc. Though basically all these shrines are the asthapanas of Hindu Gods or Godesses, they share with every other Hindu but for Kashmiri Hindus these are more than *that* to them. These are the embodiments of their age old beliefs and traditions going down well with Kashmiri psyche. It is this feeling of being different than other Hindus and preserving their separate identity which forces them to replicate what is so close to their heart or is ancestral to them. It is the same psychological drive or urge which made *pandavaas* construct great shrines or forts wherever they went during their *agyatwas* "forced displacement" or exile. *Perhaps it is the human nature to associate and identify physically, spiritually, socially and politically with the society it has been born and brought up in.*

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REGENERATE RESOURCES AND REVIVE KASHMIRIYAT...

Kashmir's physical environment needs protection, preservation and restoration in order to regenerate the principal resources of land, water and forests. Its cultural environment needs conservation of ancient monuments and Kashmiriyat. It has simultaneously to fulfil the vision of its saints and sages and to enter the modern age with the aid of science and technology.

CHAPTER 17

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION IN KASHMIR

Prof. Saligram Bhatt

INTRODUCTION OF AUTHOR

Prof. Saligram Bhatt was born at Tulamulla; Kashmir on 1st January 1931. He did his B.Sc. with honours in Chemistry and M.A. in Political Science from Punjab University. He did his PhD in International Law from Jawaharlal Nehru University and postdoctoral research as a Fulbright scholar at Southern Methodist University, Dallas.

Prof. Bhatt started his career with the Indian Air Force, which he served during the period 1951-56. He later joined the Department of Civil Aviation, from where he retired as Deputy Director General.

During 1988-1992, he served as United Nations Adviser on Aviation to Governments of Somalia, Lesotho and Botswana. In 1989, he was also appointed to the National Chair of Professor in Space Law and later as Honorary Professor of International Law in JNU. Currently, he is an honorary Professor at Hamdard University and in JNU.

Prof. Bhatt is the author of 17 books and has written over 200 research articles.

He was Vice President of KECSS during 1999-2000 and organized several national seminars. He is an Honorary Fellow of the International Astronautical Federation, Paris. His address : S-176, Greater Kailash II, New Delhi-110048. Phone : 29223933. E-mail : krishnagbhatt@vsnl.net, kgbhatt2001@yahoo.com

The United Nations has made a Universal Declaration for the protection of human environment in 1972. Since then, mankind is concerned how to safeguard environments for the future of life on this planet. There has been excessive use of earth's resources, wanton destruction of forest and non-renewable products and the burning of fossil fuels in a large scale involving release of green-house gases which have changed climates world over. Alarmed by unprecedented changes in the human environments, world society today is determined to protect global environments in any part of the world. Changes in demography with the increase in global population to the existing number of six billion people, have further precipitated environmental problems. Thus the threats to the environment and ecology of earth have produced great concern in the global society.

GEOGRAPHY OF KASHMIR

Kashmir is situated in an ecologically delicate part of the world. It forms part of the Himalayan range of mountains with limited land resources, forest wealth, biodiversity and water resources. The United Nations and the countries situated in the Himalayan range have warned of the dangerous ecological problems emerging in this region. Glaciers are already melting away, thus depriving the area of water resources. The top-soil areas are denuded of forests. There are other problems coming up. Himalayan ecology centres have, therefore, been set-up, one in Kathmandu by the United Nations and the other by India in Garhwal (The G.B Pant Institute of Environment and Development, Kosi, Garhwal), for conducting studies of environmental problems and for sustainable development.

The UNESCO has designed a special programme for "Integrated Planning for Mountain Environment" in 1984 called MAB (Man And the Biosphere Programme). The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has also initiated programmes for better management of natural resources, watershed management, village eco-system development, and better water, health and education of hill areas.

Kashmir is situated between 32.15 N to 37.5 N latitude and 72.40 E to 80.20 E longitude. The state covers an area of 222236 sq. kms., which has 78932 sq. kms., illegally occupied by Pakistan and 5180 sq. km. illegally handed over to China by Pakistan. The plains of Kashmir valley have a length of 150 kms. and a width of 42 kms.[2] Some important lakes in the valley are Dal Lake, Anchar Lake, Wullar Lake, Manasbal Lake, Nagin Lake etc. Among rivers, Chenab lies in Jammu region, Jhelum in Kashmir valley and Indus in the northern part of Kashmir which includes Gilgit. About 65 per cent of total rainfall occurs during winter and spring time in Kashmir.

MAJOR THRUST OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT MOVEMENT AND ITS RELEVANCE TO KASHMIR

The UN Declaration on Human Environment, 1972, is a kind of world charter for the protection and management of global environments. It represents the wisdom and philosophy of contemporary times which no country can afford to disregard. If we do not protect environments, the environments cannot sustain us. The Declaration has, therefore, put forth guidelines and principles for all of mankind to follow. It proclaims that "Man is both creature and moulder of his environment, which gives him physical sustenance and affords him the opportunity for intellectual, moral, social and spiritual growth.... Man has acquired the power to transform his environment in countless ways and on an unprecedented scale", says the Declaration. Therefore, "the protection and improvement of the human environment is a major issue which affects the well-being of peoples and economic development throughout the world; it is the urgent desire of the people of the whole world and the duty of all Governments."

We shall see later how much the people of Kashmir and in the government have fulfilled the above expectations of the United Nations for a better environment. The United Nations has further warned about the issues of poverty growth of unchecked population, lack of conservation et al. It has created a new vision for mankind. It gives hope when it says that "there are broad vistas for the enhancement of environmental quality and the creation of a good life. What is needed is an enthusiastic but calm state of mind and intense but orderly work."[3]

The eternal wisdom of the UN Declaration is contained in the following paragraph which the people of Kashmir and the administration need to consider carefully:

> A point has been reached in history when we must shape our actions throughout the world with a more prudent care for their environmental consequences. Through ignorance or indifference we can do massive and irreversible harm to the earthly environment on which our life and well-being depend. Conversely, through fuller knowledge and wiser action, we can achieve for ourselves and our prosperity a better life in an environment more in keeping with human needs and hopes.[4]

The United Nations has called upon all citizens, communities, enterprises and institutions at all levels to share the responsibility for construction of world environments.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS OF KASHMIR

Kashmir, like any other part of India, faces environmental problems because of economic development. However, these problems are also an outcome of unplanned development, population increase, lack of conservation policies and excessive exploitation of natural resources. During the last decade or so, militancy has further deprived the people of Kashmir of an opportunity to join the rest of India in framing a vigorous response to environmental issues. Indeed, the debate on greater autonomy has prevented-Kashmir administration from following new environmental policies for the revival of the natural environment. Not many educational efforts have been made in Kashmir to hold national seminars for the protection of environments. Due to deterioration of local administration and because of militancy, there has been large-scale damage to natural resources like forest wealth. I had discussions with the Member-Secretary of the Kashmir Environmental Board which coordinates work with the Central Environmental Board. I learnt that because of militancy there was no significant action possible in developing a new consciousness among the people of Kashmir towards environmental protection. In my lectures in May 2001 on the subject of environments in Kashmir in A.S. College, Teachers Training College and in Kashmir University, great interest was found among students and teachers on how to manage the environments for a better quality of life. The Dean of Law School, Kashmir University, Professor Abdul Salam Bhat, was keen that students be lectured on developments in environmental law, instead of space law, as planned earlier. The general faculty and students listened with attention what we are doing at the national level to safeguard the quality of environment. Lastly it seems recently some lawyers have taken keen interest to file public interest litigation for the protection of environments in Kashmir.

Environmental problems in Kashmir are due to air pollution by motor vehicles, urbanization, population increase, lack of adequate water resources, and inadequate energy.[5] Above all, there is no model followed for ecological development recently. Eco-tourism has suffered due to militancy. All attention for environment protection is taken by Dal Lake or Wullar Lake. There is urgent need to protect forests. The national policy aims to increase forest cover existing from about 19 per cent total area to 25 per cent in the 10th Five Year Plan. Kashmir forests have suffered immensely They were reservoir of a lot of wealth of herbs and biosphere reserves. Gurez valley used to grow innumerable herbs and medicines. The lakes are to be regenerated. This includes Wular Lake which is perhaps the biggest fresh water lake in Asia. The Dal Lake needs cleaning. The houseboat owners can be given some other sites to fend on eco-tourism and free the lake as a natural water reservoir.

NEW VISION NEEDED IN KASHMIR

Kashmir needs a new vision for the planning of environments There is need to revive lost natural environments like lakes, forests, wildlife etc. On the other hand, a new economic philosophy is needed for development Too much time has been wasted for autonomy issues without attending to environment issues. After all, Kashmir state like other states in India follows a federal system in which states manage their environments. However, new ideas for environmental management and development need not be ignored. The world has shrunk fast and is becoming inter-dependent in environment management Kashmir can, therefore, adopt readily global and national policies on environments in order to develop better economic and social life Abstention from economic development work and progress does not look responsible for the poor masses and for the future of Kashmir. To preserve heritage of lakes, forests, and biosphere reserves is the need of hour and of history. New forests, new lakes, new herbal gardens, etc. can be created. Kashmir's greatest poet Gulam Ahmed Mahjur has a perennial poem for the beautiful Kashmir environments. He has said:

Wulu ha Bagvano Nav Baharuk Shan Pada Kar;

Khilan Gul Khad Karan Bulbul

Thethee Saman Pada Kar.

Come O Gardner, create a new

Consciousness of spring,

When the flowers will bloom,

And the Bulbul will dance.

Another great poet of Kashmir, Master Zinda Kaul, pays this tribute to the motherland, and to environments:

Grant us the will to walk in wisdom's way,

And make dear India thy temple where

All men, all faiths, unite to worship thee.

Somewhere man has lost faith for the love of the motherland In my childhood days Kashmiris used to love the environments, keep them clean, and love nature and forests. There was peace and harmony as people of all faith lived together and worshipped alongside. Kashmiriat, the philosophy of common brotherhood practised by Kashmiris, meant a multi-cultural and a multi-religious society. Festivals marked social harmony. Lal Ded symbolized the unity of society and Kashmiriat. A leading philosopher of Kashmir, Mr. Akhtar Mohiuddin, who died in Srinagar in May 2001 has written a book in 1998 during the period of militancy in Kashmir entitled "A fresh approach to the history of Kashmir". In this book he quotes Lal Ded, the 14th century poetess for the eternal identity of Kashmir's as follows:

In time past, we were,
In time future, we shall be,
Through the ages, we have been

Mr. Akhtar Mohiuddin led an eminent group of scholars on TV Kashir in May 2001 discussing what Kashmiriat is. Other scholars included Professor Rahman Rahi, Mr. Gulam Nabi Khayal and another poet with name Mr. Akhtar. Mr. Mohiuddin paid his tributes to Kashmiri Pandit scholars and teachers of Kashmir such as Professor Jayalal Kaul and others who had inspired them in their philosophical and poetic works. He summed up the discussions on Kashmiriat. He said Kashmiriat was located in Srinagar and not in Lahore. He was not against Urdu language, he said, but Kashmiri literature, culture and language provided own identity for Kashmiri people I was then in Srinagar watching this debate on Kashmiriat on the TV Kashir.

Therefore Kashmiris are Kashmiris with their own identity and follow Lal Ded, Nund Rishi, Rupa Bhawani and other saints and sages. Their leading poets are G.A. Mahjur, Master Zinda Kaul, Krishna Zoo Razdan, Samad Mir, Rahman Rahi (who has dedicated his last book to Professor Jayalal Kaul), G.R. Santosh etc.

It is sad to say that global fundamentalism overpowered temporarily the forces of secularism in Kashmir and drove away Kashmiri Pandits through militants trained from across the border. Kashmiri Muislim population are open-minded and not like the Wahabi - Muslims. They like Hindus, says Walter Lawrence in his historical book - "The Valley of Kashmir", published in 1895. Citing examples of common places of worship by Hindus and Muslims at places like Verinag and Magam, Lawrence says: "It was only natural that the Musalmans, when they were converted to Islam should cling with tenderness to the old religious places, and should adopt sacred spots already familiar to the countryside." Lawrence further elaborates the religious tolerance of Kashmiri Hindus and Musalmans as follows.

> I have shown in my chapter on customs how certain ideas are common to the Hindus and Musalmans in Kashmir, but I attribute much of the delightful tolerance which exist between the followers of the two religions

> chiefly to the fact that the Kashmiri Musalmans never really gave up the old religion of the country.[6]

It may be said of Kashmiri Hindus also that they respect Muslim culture, poetry and common heritage as much and Kashmiriat is a mix of Muslim and Hindu traditions.

In recent months and after the bitter experience from militancy, Kashmiris are keen to reassert Kashmiriat, their soul, their life-style. The devastating militant forces of fundamentalism have reduced Kashmiri society to the terror of the gun. A large number of Muslims and their homes are devastated. The whole brother community of Kashmiri Pandits has been almost wiped out from the valley. Therefore, it is a hard task for the reconstruction in the state. Hence the need of environment movement It provides help for multi-culturalism, harmony and economic development with new ideas and tools of science.

At the global level, the world society is also moving towards controlling extremism and fundamentalism which has caused untold suffering in India, in USA and in other countries. A pluralistic global culture is emerging with globalisation of economies, culture and life-style in general. At the same time, in response to globalisation, a trend for federalism is seen which makes for local, economics, culture and eco-management of natural resources. Unity in diversity is the global formula for progress of this civilization. Kashmir understands this formula well. What is needed is good governance, removal of corruption, tolerance and patience. To rehabilitate the composite culture and environment, Kashmiri Pandits are to be resettled in Kashmir soon with dignity, safety and honour. With the return of Kashmiri Pandits to the valley, the whole of Kashmiri society will be rich again in intellect, in social life and in overall progress. I see a large section of Muslim population wanting to see Kashmiri Pandits return to the valley. How to achieve this social and human task is the need of the hour. It depends upon the intellectual skills of both the Muslim and Kashmiri Pandit communities, and on their love and courage to achieve this human task. The world knows how much sufferings have Kashmiri Pandits undergone. They are homeless in their country.

ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MONUMENTS, HERITAGE OF KASHMIR ET AL.

Environment protection needs laws. Similarly economic development must be sustainable. The Indian Environment Act, 1986 applies all over India, including Kashmir. It is in pursuance of UN Declaration on Environments of 1972, and incorporates many provisions of the Declaration. The Act provides for environment impact assessment as a result of economic development. It has created Pollution Control Boards in States to control and abate pollution. It provides for making of Environment Protection Rules, and Tribunal etc. Other environment-related laws are Water Pollution Control Act 1974, Air Pollution Control Act 1981, Wildlife Act 1972, Hazardous Substances Control Rules 1989, Environmental Clearance Notification 1993, and the Forests Act 1980 with Forest Rules 1981.

Ever since environment consciousness began in the country, economic development is in conformity with sustainable development. A leading scientist late Dr. T.N. Khoshoo in his Presidential address to the Indian Science Congress in 1986 has elaborated the principles of ecological development based on conservation, recycling, protection of natural resources and of bio-diversity.

Federalism has also been explored worldwide as a means to economic and eco-development. Dr. Anil Agarwal called economic development based on Gross Natural Product, not on Gross National Product. This implies that economic development is related to the capacity of nature to produce and sustain. In the mountain ecology system, this definition of Gross Natural Product is important to understand for the economic development of Kashmir. In the recent climate conference in New Delhi in 2002 the focus of India to reduce global warming was on sustainable consumption. In other words, conservation of natural resources forms a major goal for economic development.

It is useful to recall in this context the environmental policy statement of the Government of India made in the Indian Parliament. It stresses for man's harmony with nature. It aims to integrate environment health, development programmes and agricultural and industrial growth. The policy statement has three major goals. First, the national environmental policy is based on global issues of nature and on geo-physical changes taking place world over. Second, the policy should take immediate action for the degradation of environments. Third, there should be professional approach to check environment impact analysis by establishing "a charter for environment safety" with simultaneous increase in ecological understanding among people.

The Centre for Science and Environment in New Delhi in its comments on the policy statement rightly states that "The national environmental security system will become a total reality only when society adopts non-violence as the basis of all human relationships". The UN Declaration also calls for a calm and peaceful attitude to solve environmental issues. Terrorism has to end or it will keep a society agitated all the times.

Kashmir may look at the model of Himachal Pradesh (H.P.) for economic development. The success story of HP., is brought out by a United Nations report. In horticultural development, for example, that State has made remarkable progress. In generating income and transforming economy the progress in horticulture is tremendous. At the time of formation of H.P, fruit cultivation accounted for 1000 ha of land. Today almost 25 per cent of total cultivated area is under horticultural crops.[7] Most of the apples and other fruits are from H.P. sold in many parts of India.

Hydropower is another area of much progress in Himachal Pradesh. Kashmir can also develop further hydropower potential for which foreign investors have shown keen interest. It is reported that "There is an estimated 15000 MW power generation potential in the major rivers of the Chenab, the Jhelum, the Sindh and the Kishanganga in the State. But the State has not been able to utilize even one-tenth of the power potential because of the financial crunch."[8] It seems that courage is needed for a meaningful planning to undertake such vital projects for the State's prosperity.

MONUMENTS OF KASHMIR

Finally, I wish to refer to our concern for the monuments of Kashmir, as part of Kashmir's environments and its historical heritage. These include its temples and mosques. The ancient monuments of Kashmir are in bad shape. They are to be protected. Kashmir's heritage is a part of global heritage.

Some of these monuments include Pandrethan temple, Avantisvami temple, Bodhisattva, discovered at Pandrethan, Hari Parbat temple and hill, Patthar masjid, Sankaracharya temple, Khanqah of Shah Hamdan, Jama Masjid, Mughal Gardens, Pari Mahal, Kher Bhawani temple at Tulla Mulla, Nishat Bagh, Harwan Excavations, Martand, Avantipara, Manasbal lake, Dal lake, Wular lake, Gurur, and the valleys of Kashmir such as Pehalgam, Lolab, Gurez etc.

Militancy has taken heavy toll of above valleys and monuments. The mass migration of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley has left most of temples unattended and in bad shape. A journal called Vitasta, volume 2002 has recently been printed from Calcutta devoted to the "Temples of Kashmir". These temples must be preserved as part of heritage of Kashmir and India. The UNESCO may provide expertise to save this global heritage. Writing about these great remains of history, A. Foucher, the noted historian and indologist has said in his Introduction to a master-piece work on monuments of Kashmir by Ram Chandra Kak: "Personally, I have often thought that there remains more classic antiquity still living in the shadowy heart of the Kashmir jungle than in the theatrical scenery of the Mediterranean shores."[9] Praising Mr. R.C. Kak's work Foucher says: "But a mystic fancy leads me astray. No doubt we should do better to remain on the solid ground of archaeology and let ourselves be led by our author from temple to temple, from mosque to mosque, from Mughal Garden to Mughal Garden, round Srinagar, or up or down stream. On all these remains of glorious past, he has much information to give us, no less judicious than accurate."[10]

CONCLUSIONS

Environment protection movement in Kashmir is a movement of ideas. It means a new programme for sustainable development. Ecological economics is needed to protect mountain ecology. It calls for conservation of biodiversity reserves. Rural ecosystems are to be revived. New look is needed for water and land management. Major problems related to deterioration of soil and forests are to be given priority. Environment impact assessment is to be carried out for hydropower projects.

On the sociological front, Kashmir needs to live in peace and harmony with nature. Terrorism has to end to provide for peaceful exploration of economic development and eco-tourism. The beautiful valleys, rivers and forests are to be protected and revived to past glory. New schemes for wildlife sanctuaries are to be planned. Herbs and bio-diversity plantation needs protection.

Kashmir is to be rehabilitated in its ethos with cultural and social harmony. Kashmiriat will guide Kashmir to progress. Kashmiri Pandit migrants have to be resettled in the valley with honour. Thus their heritage of temples needs protection along with the historical monuments and mosques. Academic and social institutions need new impetus of ideas for progress. New knowledge in the global science, space exploration, and environment movement is to be integrated with the purpose to enhance the quality of life in Kashmir. Above all, the goals of UN Environment Declaration 1972 relating to conservation, multi-cultural harmony, population control, and ecological economics should form basis of the new planning for life in the 21st century Kashmir.[11] Kashmir is a part of Himalayan region. In the words of Professor M.G.K. Menon, this region needs ecological security, regeneration of principal resources of land, water and forests, productive development, and an integrated approach. A holistic approach is therefore needed for development.[12] Kashmiris will show courage and vision in developing a new environment and a new Kashmir of the dreams of its saints and sages, and fulfilling the vision of modern science.

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A SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE...

The modern period has seen many ups and downs for the Kashmiris, but the conspiracy hatched by the fundamentalist forces has led to their exit from the valley. Yet the community has seized upon this tragedy, to arise from the ashes of destruction like a latter-day Phoenix.

CHAPTER 18

KASHMIRI PANDIT TODAY

DWARKA NATH MUNSHI

INTRODUCTION OF AUTHOR

Dwarka Nath Munshi has a Master's Degree in Economics from the Punjab University.

He is a reputed journalist, author and social activist. Starting his career with the Times of India, he moved on to the Eastern Economist in 1953. Subsequently, he became the Editor-in Chief of the Yojana group of journals in the Government and later the Editor of the Indian and Foreign Review. He also held high positions in the national networks of information like the All India Radio, Directorate of Audio-Visual Publicity, Press Information Bureau etc.

After retirement, he took over as the Chairman, Editorial Board of Koshur Samachar and converted it into a forceful instrument of the Kashmiri Pandits in their fight against injustice. He was elected President of the All India Kashmiri Samaj in 1991, and provided a balanced leadership to the community at a critical stage. Currently, he is Chairman, ADCS Trust. He is a founder Member of the Kashmir Education, Culture and Education Society.

Shri Munshi has authored several books on planning and has travelled extensively abroad.

Kashmir, at the very mention of the name, brings varied emotions on the faces of all around - nostalgia, curiosity, sympathy, pleasure, pain, fear, hope, love, nature's bounty. Its story flows out of the mystic as its history traces the highs and lows of the worldly, mundane life.

The Kashmiri Pandit is the central character and witness of this tragi-romantic account of half a millennium of its recorded history. This direct descendant has gone through thick and thin, through ebb and tide, through brilliant accomplishments and abject depression. Yet his hallmark is that, much like a straw tossed alternately in turbulent and calm ocean, he has managed to steer himself to survival.

So much has been said, written, and discussed about that past that we may rather try and see him as he is today, say over the last half a century of free India.

Freedom from the British rule in 1947 was not a straight or direct boon for a princely state; it was much complicated in the Jammu and Kashmir State commonly known as J & K state and further condensed to just Kashmir. Indeed, the picture arising in most common person's minds is not much more than that of the valley of Kashmir - the heaven on earth - the crown of India, the symbol of secular India, as Mahatma Gandhi put it.

The irony of it all is, however, that the state, and especially Kashmir got plunged into misery and turmoil even before the dawn of Independence. An assertion like this needs at least an outline to be drawn of how life was lived by the two principal communities - Pandits and Muslims - over say a hundred years before the historic turning point of freedom from the British.

I have lived most of my impressionable years of life in Kashmir. The picture of those past years arising in my mind is generally of how I played in dales and lakes as much as in dirt and squalor, with simple folks who cherished nothing more than truth and love, who hated nothing as much as debasement and dishonesty and feared nothing except sin, and sin was all that can cause hurt.

This, and the most precious other elements of it all, was the quintessence of the rich and sublime cultural ethos which originated from Kashyap Rishi in the hoary past. Over the centuries, this was nurtured, elaborated and refined by sages, saints and thinkers of different faiths who absorbed and assimilated the profound philosophies and experiences of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and others. Out of this priceless mixture sprouted the uniquely multicultural, liberating concepts of the human spirit, tolerance, harmony and equality of all living beings and faiths. These were priceless concepts propounded by supremely enlightened saints, sages and philosophers like the incomparable Lalleshwari and Nund Rishi, and bequeathed to the generations to follow.

They worked to broaden the human intellect and reject the prevalent currents that could be divisive or agents of disharmony. In short it was a tireless pursuit of compassion and harmony, of quintessence of tolerance, and of all pervading and universal oneness of humanity and its elevated spirit.

Such was the impression it left on the mind generally that it came to be represented in natural and physical entities, in brick and stone, which stand as unique symbols of human quest for enlightenment and realisation of truth. Altogether they constitute invaluable and irreplaceable treasures of humankind's endeavours in the path of ultimate salvation and peace.

And what is no less important is that it was this Rishi-Sufis ennobling influence that shaped the form, character and genius of the Kashmiri heritage.

For long years, thus, Kashmiris were enjoying an extraordinary communal harmony following their repression in general, and the persecution of KPs' in particular, by alien Muslim invaders in earlier centuries. Peace and tranquillity had thereafter settled on the land which was the envy of many a people. Truly was it said that the Pandits and Muslims were two brothers pursuing two different faiths in perfect mutual affection, respect and trust. They revered and respected equally the sufis, saints and sages. They shared each other's traditions and rituals, places of worship and happily participated in each other's festivals. Indeed, they kept the core of religion outside the circle of day-to-day social life. The cardinal principle was to protect the kindly flame of faith as a very personal treasure and a torch to be used only on one's chosen path of righteousness, leading to salvation, God and the ultimate truth.

Both Hindus and Muslims were self-respecting and deeply religious but without any consuming fanaticism. They radiated the warmth of affection all round and would be always ready to go to each other's help. In times of happiness or distress they would call each other from the windows of their homes, enlarging the joy by spreading it and dissolving the pain by sharing.

Never did that unsophisticated, pure, innocent style of living allow one to smell the filth and the disorder around, to feel the pressure of poverty, to fear loneliness or helplessness, to be abandoned or ignored. It was as though a huge commune of sorts, ekeing out individual family lives but sharing the joys and sorrows, and essentially feeling in level with each other. All that in sum total was the ingrained Sufi culture, the unique, pure *Kashmiriat.* To an outsider this would appear to be out of this world, a dreamland.

It was a tragic state of the times that the decade of the thirties-mid-forties of the 20th century witnessed the sowing and proliferating of the seeds of discord between the two communities. How, in the world, did that happen and where from did it originate will be instructive to trace.

Those were the days of a world-wide Depression which, together with two centuries of the British exploitation of India, had emaciated the country. Kashmir had its share of misery of unemployment, rock bottom prices of agricultural produce, crippling glut of its arts and crafts, its cottage industry products, visitations of natural calamities, epidemics, floods and widespread crop diseases.

This had cast untold miseries on the general populace. Only those with fixed incomes, principally the salaried state government employees - many of whom were KPs working as small-time clerks and other functionaries - were insulated against the acute rigours of the Depression. Most people belonging to other sections with majority of Muslims - peasants, artisans, craftsmen, unskilled labourers, small shop-keepers - were suffering great privations.

A silent, deep distress permeated the atmosphere, which was imperceptibly being articulated into discontent and anger among the masses by a group of educated government-employed but disgruntled Muslims against the personal rule of the Maharaja, a Hindu Dogra from Jammu.

Here we may digress a little to understand the irony of related circumstances. India of the times was divided into essentially two broad forms of Administration - both autocratic systems - (i) The British India, governed directly under the British Crown represented by the Viceroy and the I.C.S i.e. the highly cherished Indian civil service composed almost exclusively of Englishmen drawn from generally their high ranking aristocratic families and thoroughly trained in England to rule India with an iron hand. And (ii) The Indian princedom -Maharajas, Rajas and smaller principalities, again under the watchful suzerainty of the British Empire. The J & K state was one of the bigger states. 'Unfortunately' it was a very strategic area geographically and in terms of military expeditions as well as containment of major countries around- rivals competing for extended spheres of influence.

The British were making repeated attempts to take away areas such as Gilgit and surrounding principalities out of the Maharaja's suzerainty for direct rule under the Crown. This had rendered the Maharaja vulnerable to their conspiracies including promotion of internal discord and disloyalty to weaken his position.

Maharaja Hari Singh, however, treaded with caution and showed some sagacity in moving with the times. Unlike most others of his ilk he introduced, gradually and with discretion, some measures of political reform and social welfare and development, while others generally continued to remain unconcerned and unmindful of the fast changing times. Hari Singh was even singularly bold to stand and express nationalist aspirations when he advocated for India's independence in an Imperial Round Table Conference in London along with India's top freedom seeking leaders. This understandably did not endear him to the British who went on laying traps for him.

Hari Singh had set his mind on a forward moving progressive path. He forced the pace of spreading education and reaching it to the general masses even if it had to be through soft 'Compulsory' means. This was primarily focussed on the Muslim majority benefit who were often indifferent to education. Medical facilities were upgraded and extended. General hygiene was promoted by modern campaigns of observing 'cleanliness weeks'. Electricity generation, road construction and other infrastructure were extended. In course of time he even loosened the autocracy by setting up grass-root democratic institutions and popularly elected members even at the highest level of administration- a couple of Ministers. While he was gradual and calculating not to upturn the cart by sudden heavy doses of reform, he had already out-paced the other states in introducing progressive means and methods, especially to elevate the majority backward masses.

In these "revolutionary" policies and programmes some of his own establishment were not too happy, but a few Kashmiri Pandits in his service were quietly supportive and offering useful advice.

Meanwhile, India as a whole was drawing more and more into the long and tortuous struggle for freedom from foreign rule. The British, on their part, resorted to all 'fair' and unfair means to stem the tide. The most effective way they had found was to divide and break the people into different sections on the basis of religion, caste, economic and social classes, and make them fight each other. They indeed had succeeded in it as nothing else could, resulting in a burning jealousy which, with time, got turned, by the rising political rhetoric and aspirations of the vested interests among the separatist political leadership, into a deep animus and hostility.

It was in such times and circumstances that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was pushed into the vortex by a small group of well-to-do influential and educated Muslims in Srinagar. Here was good material, just returned from Aligarh with an M.Sc. degree, but frustrated and full of angst, having failed to get a college teaching job for which he had worked and dreamed. They took him only as a cover for their underhand activities, but he soon built his personal popularity among the Muslim populace by his thundering oratory and melodious renderings from the holy Koran.

It took him and the other emerging Muslim leadership no time to fill their followers and fans with anger and hatred against the Hindu Dogra Maharaja Hari Singh-and for no good reason other than keeping the flame alive-for the Kashmiri Pandits whom they saw as exploiters of the Muslims.

But the facts were otherwise, almost the opposite. One great fact was that, while agriculture was the main occupation of the

Muslim majority, the Pandits too were peasants in proportionate numbers ekeing out their livelihood at the same scale as their Muslim compatriots but, understandably, in smaller numbers in the overall. A striking difference, however, was that the Pandits pursued education as a tenet of faith, investing most of their meagre resources in it. They thus were more visible as small time clerks and subordinates at the lowest rungs, as much as they strove to take up professions like teaching, medicine, law and so on. These were not much more paying than the other economic activities in agriculture, handicrafts, flourishing artisan's home and cottage industry, business and trade and so forth. Yet they created an artificial aura of a superior white collar status.

Relief from such oppressive times was on its way, paradoxically! The world was hotting up with the winds of war which released it from the grip of the Great Depression yielding to the Great World War II of 1939-45. The economies of countries not directly involved in the war boomed. Employment was at its peak. In Kashmir prices of its products and agricultural and horticultural produce shot up to unprecedented levels. While the warring countries were destroying and bleeding each other, those not directly in it experienced a prosperity as never before.

The common people in Kashmir, each at their level, were happily busy filling their coffers with this 'Manna from the Heavens' and enjoying life to the full. The atmosphere was peaceful and harmonious. The jealousies and animosities generated by political elements so recently seemed to be forgotten. Kashmiris, Muslims and Hindus, were smiling together once again.

Yet this was not to last long. As the war receded, the political struggles in India and Kashmir hotted up and advanced to their final phase. Sheikh Abdullah's National Conference had given the call for the Maharaja's autocratic rule to Quit Kashmir, just as India had launched the 'Quit India' movement. The whole country was up in revolt. But alas politics had divided the people into two main communal camps of Muslims and others. The country was divided accordingly, Pakistan being born as the country of Muslims.

It was the Sheikh's political ideology and more particularly political interests that J&K state (with overwhelming Muslim majority in the Valley) fought to stay with India rather than go to Pakistan.

Here, it must be said to the unforgettable credit and glory of the Sheikh, the National Conference and the whole Muslim community of Kashmir that they all rose as one man to frustrate the Pakistani design of annihilating the Hindus of the state. They stood fast to protect and save the minuscule minority from the tribal marauders. This was not only a great heroic act to be written in golden letters. It was something unique, unparalleled in human history, that while just beyond the borders of the state the same stock of Hindus and Muslims were engaged in barbaric mutual extermination, Kashmiris regarded them with pity and pain in the heart. For the Pandits, it was a miraculous escape from devastation. Essentially it was *Kashmiriat* at work.

India got independence on Aug. 15, 1947. Pakistan was born the night before. The operation resulted in intense pain, streams of blood and enormous destruction all round. The worste was just about to happen. Within a couple of months Pakistan, still in its huggies, so to say, marched its forces into the Jammu & Kashmir state and continues to stay put even after these 55 years of independence. While the trauma is endless and multi-dimensional, we will look at it from the Kashmiri Pandits' viewpoint.

Pakistan had organised the attack all along its borders with the J & K state. It had planned it with all the elements of surprise, camouflage and Jehad as well as the temptation of unbounded joys of flesh and fisc. The marauders comprised hordes of tribals, wild and ferocious, under the directions, command and guidance by the Pakistani army officers, regulars and armament. They had struck from behind the smoke-screen of the Standstill Agreement with the state authorities who were still busy poring over the complexity in which the British had placed the state while they were leaving and where India was directly involved with the state, within its boundaries as it stood after Pakistan had been carved out of the country. The invaders marched fast, scorching everything they passed through. The brutes had no sense to recognise even their co-religionists and in the heat of their passion they spared nothing, nobody. It was only when the Indian forces descended on them as fast as they could, that the hordes retreated, razing the land to dust.

Gradually the defence situation stabilised. The Maharaja's administration, having collapsed under the disaster, was supplanted by what came to be called the 'Awami Raj' the Peoples' Administration, or to put it in other words, the 'Popular Government'.

The highly cherished Awami Raj failed to measure up to its promise and performance in several aspects in the public mind perhaps born as it was in the conflicts of Partition and Accession and its aftermath. The top leaders of the ruling National Conference took little time to develop mutual rivalries and jealousies. This inevitably led them to create rival blocs and power centres within the party and ruling circles. The Lion of Kashmir Sheikh Abdullah himself was no exception. Rather, he promoted and led his own faction of turncoats so much that within less than five years of being the 'Prime Minister' of the state, he grew so vain and intolerant that he had to be overthrown in a *coup* by his own close colleagues, and consigned to oblivion for over two decades.

The progressive- radical 'Naya Kashmir' was almost forgotten, it was now a period essentially of "each unto himself and devil take the hindmost". The state had now entered a long period of misfortune. In the words of Charles Dickens, "it was a time of darkness, it was a time of light". Chief Ministers would come and go. The general administration had slipped into a rut engaged mostly in loot and lust.

As for the KP, he was not immune to having his share of what would be spared for him by the main players, but weighed on the social scale, he was a heavy loser. It was obvious his traditional dignity in the society was on the wane. He was losing his sheen and even receiving some deliberate barbs aimed at making him feel as being suffered as an unwanted, unequal poor relation.

All this time, roughly from the mid-sixtees of the 20th century to the early eightees, while the political conditions in the state were giving alarm signals, sometimes light, other times strong, the Central Government would be looking the other way. The drift was often sought to be broken by the Central authorities with bagfiils of money thrown into the developing whirlwind to keep it calm or sweep the dirt under the carpet. But the hunger for it always grows by what it feeds upon. Worse still, the unearned and unproductive riches were good for nothing more than creating fertile ground for all round degeneration — callousness, corruption and conspiracy.

It was under this new dispensation, run by the Kashmir Valley's overwhelming majority of the Muslims, that the Kashmiri Pandit could not help feeling a slide in his station and status in the Kashmiri society, in his role in it, in his fortunes and life in the State, his home of thousands of years. Imperceptible in the early stages, it turned inexorable and endless in time. He was getting isolated, edged out, uncared for. He found nobody to listen to his problems, understand his woes.

No doubt, two decades earlier, the community had noticed some symptoms of what was to come but had generally overlooked it. Their reaction then was limited to try and organise themselves into a united force by self-correction, mostly of'social reform'. The idea was primarily introduced by a man of vision, Shri Kashyap Bhandu, and a group of young persons mostly in legal profession: - A.N. Kak, S.N. Fotedar, S.N. Dhar, J.L. Kilam etc. In the political sphere, however, their agenda was thin and mostly inconsequential, and the effort and thrust quite feeble.

The forces and motivations on the other side were strong and determined. Eventually, thus the small numbers of the Pandits, weakened further by the confusion of individualism, failed to make any marked impression. Nevertheless, their social agenda got a refreshing, constructive thrust under the leadership of Kashyap Bhandu. He was born in village Geur in Kashmir. Most villages were backword then, with little educational facilities. The rural folk lived simple hard lives while the urbanites took them as naive or knaves. Bhanduji, however, showed his spirit and promise early. He went wandering in other parts of the country, got healthy exposure and returned to Kashmir to emerge as the pole star Pandit to work for their all enveloping emancipation.

To analyse a man's life, it is necessary to know not merely what he does but also what he avoids to do, or purposely leaves alone or undone. Thus, we see that he did not harp on the oppression and harm done to the community as much as he sought to strengthen it by infusing courage and confidence and selfreliance as positive action, which would be the right response for their long-term salvation. His emphasis was on social reform, on developing a modern outlook in day-to-day living, on power and dignity of labour, on empowering women, the meek, and the timid by collective voice and action.

It is instructive and interesting to see that there was an aspect of subtlety and dual purpose to almost everything he undertook for the common people's welfare. For instance, one of his first priorities was to develop a suitable place in Srinagar for the community to congregate every week, in a spiritual and joyous healthy setting. He selected a splendid site for the purpose and went to work on its development. This was at a toe of the sacred Hari Parbat, where all Devis and Devtaas of KPs reside. Atop the gentle slopes of the hillock at this point resides Goddess Hari, resplendent in glowing vermillion and decked in fragrant marigold and rose. On the opposite side lay vast fields of almond orchards and enormous stretches of shimmering waters reaching to the foot of Mata Ragnya's abode at Khir Bhawani.

This glorious, environmentally refreshing and spiritually elevating point needed to be enlarged to accommodate the growing numbers that flocked there every Sunday morning. So Bandhuji called upon the youths to cut a new pathway away and around it, which yielded the desired space. This seemingly single objective carried in itself a few other significant ones. It attracted the generally stay-at-home people, women in particular, to come out into the open, healthy environs for a long morning Parikrama in communion with nature and the divine and in step with others to establish a social closeness and to take up boldly some manual labour as a rewarding exercise.

Amazingly, the women-folk were drawn powerfully to these Sunday prayers and social intermingling. On one such morning. Bandhuji hoisted the Community flag at the holy spot. He then brought out a knife in the right hand and with it slashed his left arm. As blood gushed out in thick drops, he poured it at the flag staff base to sanctify it, and bear it as witness to the vow of life-long service to the community. The entire audience stood up in awe and solemnity to make a covenant with Ma Hari, looking from above, to abide by all-round social reform in the society as delineated by

Bandhuji. It was a unique and memorable event, the spirit of courage and selfless sacrifice. The memory of that magnificent moment still shines in the heart of a lad of four tender summers who lives to relate today the unforgettable experience.

The changes that followed were pleasantly spontaneous. Men folk started taking to dhoti or Pyjama/Kurta and gradually to more manageable caps in place of the never-ending yards of the 'Dastaar'. For women in particular, the Sari system of dress was a great liberating act, especially in the headgear. The Taranga involved complex intricate details. It was a tedious time-taking and tiring exercise and demanded assistance of a second person, expert in the process of placing many expensive items in proper place at each step. The sari had dispensed with it all, at one stroke, with just a flick covering the head with ease and elegance. I5 guess in hindsight that apart from acquiring a smart new visage, KPs integrated their identity with the Hindus in the plains as also shed the laze-inducing alien system of dress which was representing the remnants of the Muslim conquerors way of covering themselves whole.

Social reform had now become the watchword after a collective vow was taken. It came as a ready answer to the numerous meaningless customs and sometimes ridiculous rituals such as at birth, weddings, festivals, birthdays, death, et. al. The dowry system was the most hateful of all. It involved not only utter waste of scarce resources which often resulted in ruin. It also created sulk and bitterness and long-drawn quarrels and disputes, where it should have been mutual love and regard and close relationship between the parties concerned. The vow did produce a salutary effect, though only for a time before it started weakening and taking other alarming, crude proportions and characteristics. Even so, there are many young men and even girls-the centre of this ritual-who abhor and reject those customs and prefer to observe Social Reform.

Among Bandhuji's many social reforms, his persistent advocacy of widow remarriage was taken regrettably with little seriousness acceptability by the community. A pity it was, indeed, how numerous young widows, sometimes childless and helpless, sometimes with children but not enough means, would pass their lives in mortifying loneliness, penury and social stigma or disdain, living from day to day at the mercy and sometimes cruelty of even their near relations. Where some remarriages were solemnised, these were generally wickedly referred to as having been out of utter desperation or mindless bravado and even other unmentionable reasons. Hardly was it taken as emancipation.

The pathos of it all is heightened when we realise that, typical of the times and the negative influences they live in, they have now almost accepted with relative ease or resignation the trauma of divorce followed by remarriage, putting at stake the lives at least of their offspring, when they had resisted unthinkingly the ameliorative widow remarriage.

Times were, meanwhile, changing fast in political and even social fields and Kashmir was moving onto the centre-stage. All the same, the reform movement had promoted some basic tools of response activities of long-term meaning and value.

One was the launching of' Martand' in Urdu, the mouthpiece of Kashmiri Pandits and practically the first daily newspaper of Kashmir. Its popularity was instant and phenomenal. Not only did it enter every KP household regularly every morning, it made a niche for itself in every mind and heart there. Bandhuji poured his soul into it day after day and filled its columns with bold and fearless fight against injustice, with noble ideas and pointed comments, fiery patriotism and words of wisdom for one and all. Martand rose to great heights not only in Kashmir but as a medium of dependable information and interpretation of events even outside the state.

It is painful to say that such a useful and influential institution should have been callously and incompetently handled and allowed to decline and decay later. Yet the name Martand continues to fire emotions, esteem, enthusiasm and pride in all hearts who keep longing for it.

To build institutions of physical or mental growth, to pave the way to enlightenment, to help those in need, to keep the community informed, enthused, involved or committed, to fight peaceful battles, all this and more simply needs money. Where would it come from, placed and circumstanced as the KPs were then? The community had, therefore, to work out a magical novelty, the Mochchphol. Translated literally into English, it means a 'handful of grain' say rice, people's staple food. The main idea behind it was for every family to keep aside every morning at least this much of rice taken out of what was being taken to the kitchen to cook for the family, and that would hardly make any difference. At the end of the month, a collector would come and receive this donation and deposit it at the central store. It was from there that part of the collection would be distributed among the needy, and the remaining would be sold in the market fetching money for funding the diverse activities of the community organization- the Yuvak Sabha.

Mochchphol represented a lofty, yet easy and eminently affordable sacrifice equally from the haves and the less fortunate, on one hand, and promoting a social equality and consciousness of helping the needy and the community organization, on the other.

As already stated briefly, the decade of the 1930's was marked by human tragedies arising from the economic depression and sacrifices demanded by the freedom struggle. In Kashmir the Muslim Conference was converted into the National Conference for tactical reasons in the emerging situation. While the political movement intensified, the Pandit community offered it whatever support it could afford, especially in the ideological and intellectual inputs in forming the radical plan and programme of 'Naya Kashmir'. Yet when Independence came and the state acceded to India, they were not always or easily trusted.

Here, we must break the narrative, and return to the period of Independence and after. Nineteen forty-seven marks the historic change in India of subject people to sovereignty. This happened only a couple of years of the peace returning to a war torn world. Peoples of the world had set about building a new world of peace and prosperity. As if by a miracle, the past-war world turned into a vast scientific and technological laboratory creating amazing revolutions dedicated to swift and unprecedented creativity.

In India's case, the political revolution had created a momentum and zest as never before, in almost all spheres of human activity. And Kashmir did not remain untouched.

The economic boom had already transformed to a remarkable extent the activities of manufacture and marketing of Kashmir's famous handicrafts of varied nature. Then there were fruits, fresh and dry, and cash crops like the famed saffron and so on.

Agriculture made advances too in producing quality seeds for home and export, high yielding varieties of horticultural and other commercial crops, conversion of low-yielding and low-income crop lands into high-demand fruit orchards and much else.

Education, which was generally popular and prevalent in academics, spread in science, professional and vocational fields greatly enhancing the values, incomes as well as the quality of end products. In all these activities the Kashmiri Pandit, normally conventional in his approach, shared the excitement of the new times and came forward willingly to participate in it.

Unhappily for Kashmir, they were often denied the opportunity to enrich the state with their talents and enthusiasm in matters of State Government encouragement and assistance. They were overlooked in employment opportunities too. All through these long and painful years, the Pandit community stuck to the state with amazing fortitude. They fought shoulder to shoulder for political emancipation and economic and social reform, some of which even hit them hard.

A most painful measure of the ' New Kashmir' manifesto was of gifting "land to the tiller" without giving any compensation to the large holders, nor making any provision for their rehabilitation. In short they were just pushed out on to the roads. A more inhuman aspect, commonly believed in regard to this revolutionary Act, is that its formulation was a well-guarded secret, let out selectively to the favourites to make suitable mutations etc. before the date it was announced to be implemented, to side-step its rigours.

The measure devastated a large number of families, many of them being aristocrat Pandits, who were overnight felled to dust. Basically these were absentee landlords, a prominent, respected class of people. They were not the tyrant types of the common conception nor the likes of rich kulaks. Most of the time the relations between the master and the tenant were cordial and accommodating. And when the landlord or the tenant fell in trouble, there was empathy all around. The uprooted lot had to go through misery in adjusting themselves in the new set-up.

Another class, though smaller in comparison, were the Pandit money lenders. Some among them were, indeed, usurers who evoked little sympathy when the new order decreed a moratorium in repaying the loans. In the absence of a regular banking system, they had, no doubt, a role in the small town economy, but were almost ousted without anybody shedding a tear for them.

The largest section of the Pandit community were of the service class, primarily in State Government small time jobs. With a bit of grease here and there, they were a contented lot, revelling in their assured security and status. For them and more for the upcoming ever large numbers the altered circumstances spelled doom. The doors of state offices were closed to them for there were now the claimants from the erstwhile un-attracted majority community youth who had to be given preference for obvious reasons. At the higher levels in the administration the crest was maintained and Pandits continued with their more or less usual share.

The general conditions were getting tougher by the day. The means of livelihood were steadily drying up. No less alarming was the ever growing difficulty in finding admissions in higher and professional courses. That, above all, was grave enough for the community as a whole to sit up and think.

Now when a situation had developed where every hope of a fair deal was receding, pressures were building at the family as well as the society level to do something to survive in honour and dignity. The only option available seemed to move out into the wide open world of opportunities - India. Yet the love for the land of birth, of thousands of years as its original inhabitants, of its cultural and social and spiritual ethos which they had enriched, of the very elements which make up their being and beliefs, were too deep-rooted to break from, even when there was growing tyranny, forced alienation from their own soil and hatred assiduously generated by the fundamentalist and fanatical sections swelling in numbers day by day.

Nevertheless the youth, enveloped by mental depression and disgust but egged on by hope, started from 1948 onwards to migrate, though not so conspicuously yet, to the capital, the metropolitan cities, anywhere they had a contact, to try their luck and test their pluck. In essence, the Pandits were waking up, breaking their chains of conventions of old world values, of the exclusive respect for the white collar and the traditional sit-at-home ease. They would test new fields and factories, new lands and fortunes and new life styles.

Meanwhile, as this was going on somewhat merrily and gaining momentum and success, the agents of disharmony and devastation were running alongside. Across the borders of Kashmir in India was Pakistan raring to snatch Kashmir state, which has been the undying factor of its enmity with India marked by all the means it can muster. The most potent of these is the widely known and detested terrorism across the border with the state, also called the proxy war. The state has been suffering this all along, as we have seen here, earlier. But the most vulnerable and the worst sufferers in this continuing trauma and tragedy have been the Kashmiri Pandits.

As the closing decade of the last (20th) century was approaching this took more sinister turn and a dreadful result, with a dress rehearsal in 1986 of what was to come soon. Four years later at the beginning of 1990, the whole valley (and in time the whole state) was swept by the demons of death and destruction, the agents of the enemy, Pakistan.

That is recent (and current) history, fresh enough and unforgettable to be related here in detail. In short the entire Kashmiri Pandit Community in the valley was torn apart and driven out of home in stark nothingness. This was an excruciatingly painful uprooting - all at once and for everybody- from the past, the centuries-old traditions, styles of living, bonds of love and relationships, of faith and belief, of a special view of life, of loyalties and responsibilities.

On the one hand was this immense spiritual and mental drain. On the other was the incalculable material deprivation. This was a trauma such as had never been experienced at this scale and in this manner.

In this bitter hour of their history the Pandit community had to make room for much flexibility, innovation and adaptation in their day-to-day life and long held values, rituals, habits and customs, and in their emotions and sensibilities.

It was now becoming increasingly apparent that the past was foreign country, where they did things differently. At the same time, as the Pandits left the confines of the Valley behind and walked into a new environment (in Jammu, Delhi and other far and near places - taken by chance or choice) - a fresh breeze blowed into them elevating the spirit into new heights of aspirations. It was like they were walking with destiny, as Churchill once put it at the end of the war, and all those past rigours (from Independence onwards) had been but a preparation for the hour of trial and achievement. It was as though a benign force was urging them on to a glory of not only to survive the harsh change but to develop the potential to lead it to a stunning success and determinedly to do what they would have to do to achieve their own renaissance and seek to better their condition as well as of the nation.

To state this is not to give them more credit than deserved. It is in the history of these people to be always in relative minority in their land of birth, and yet be at centrestage most of the time. They have an enviable record of having produced persons of extraordinary perception and calibre in diverse fields, of spiritual attainments, of state-craft, administration, diplomacy and other areas impacting on the varied aspects of human activity.

Scholars and missionaries of great merit and repute are known to have gone out to distant places to spread new ideas and thoughts. And it is widely known that Kashmir has attracted from time to time persons of high spiritual attainments, ostensibly to interact with them for enhanced understanding of complex concepts. A most notable case, for example, is of Kashmiris' special interpretation of the philosophy popularly known as Saivism which has captured the imagination of countless sages and savants, scholars and spiritualists, who were drawn to Kashmir for better light and understanding.

At the same time, the community has been victim of strong prejudices of tyrant invaders. If they survived the extremities of their tyranny, it was their special acumen to adjust to the new realities, or their depth of understanding and wisdom to just migrate to safer realms, place their priceless attributes at the disposal of the rulers, gain the favour of the court and, with wisdom and sincerity, rise to high positions in the land of adoption.

Or, again, in relatively recent times, Kashmiri Pandits have, in matters of state craft, civil administration or judicial prudence, commanded heights of power and popularity in neighbouring areas, in north India, especially what are now states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, U.P. to name a few, where the larger states or small principalities under Rajas and Maharajas found them efficient and trustworthy to run their kingdoms.

In our own times in free India, Kashmiri Pandits have exhibited their talents in abundant measure in handling affairs of state and administration at critical junctures as much as in normal circumstances and times. A most memorable occasion was the war with Pakistan in 1971, when the enemy was squarely defeated and split into two countries of Pakistan and Bangladesh. In that great enterprise of policy planning and delicate diplomacy, the central players comprised a brilliant team of half a dozen who happened to be from the KP community.

Today as we look around we find the women and men of the community all working out of their shell of yore, the white collar, whether they be in the motherland or across the seven seas. They are in medicine, in media, music, military, Management et al. They are in engineering, in enterprise, education entertainment, in science, space, culture, adventure and what have you all having proved themselves with credit.

It has been said that one can find the 100% educated KP community everywhere yet nowhere in particular.

Wherever they are, in whatever numbers, they go to their social Associations to be together on the traditional festive occasions or to live a relaxed day's life like it was back home.

Truly can it be said that the Kashmiri Pandits today are a community in the process simultaneously of continuation and renewal, seeking a fresh and yet more glorious identity in excellence.

AFTERWORD

M. K. Kaw

We have traversed in this volume the entire panaroma of Kashmir's history. We are witness to the dizzy heights of achievement and the abysmal gulfs of misery and deprivation that have been the fate of the Kashmiri Pandits.

In all this, the Kashmiri Pandit emerges as a member of a small, select group, always keen to master new languages and break into lyrical poetry or chiselled prose in any of them, fair in colour and fairer in his sense of justice, handsome of appearance and handsomer in his accomplishments, an avid student of any subject under the sun and a keen intellectual with a penchant for originality of thought and felicity of expression.

Thus Indian history is crowded with the names of Kashmiri Pandits who have excelled in grammar and poesy, statecraft and governance, philosophy and spirituality, art and architecture. The more the Kashmiri Pandit has been victimized, the dizzier the heights he has scaled.

Today, when all seems lost and the demons of fundamentalism appear to have buried the noble truths of kashmiriyat under a mountain of corpses, optimism may seem uncalled for. Yet no student of the past can fail to predict that the gravest tragedy in the history of Kashmiri Pandits could be the harbinger of their greatest victory.

As soon as the Pandit crosses the Banihal and moves into the broader expanse of the Indo-Gangetic plain, it is almost as if he sheds off a skin. He ceases to be a frog in the well and tastes the glory of the infinite ocean. Gone is the time when a clerk's job in the Accountant General's Office was for him the pinnacle of his ambition; there are now no hurdles to cross, no limits to what he can achieve.

This is not to say that Kashmir was the enchanted vale that held its inhabitants captive in the miasma of its physical charms. Or that Kashmiri Pandits will not go back.

Some of us will return almost at once. We shall go back to our jobs, to our lands, to our shops, to our factories, to our orchards. Others would like to return later or come back as visitors. But all Kashmiri Pandits, without exception, would like to retain, in perpetuity, the right to return and the claim to the citizenship of Kashmir.

For wherever the Kashmiri Pandit may go, however high or far, he can never forget that paradise on earth from where his forefathers were expelled, for that was where his tribe had its origin and its roots. It is his heritage forever and forever...

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